

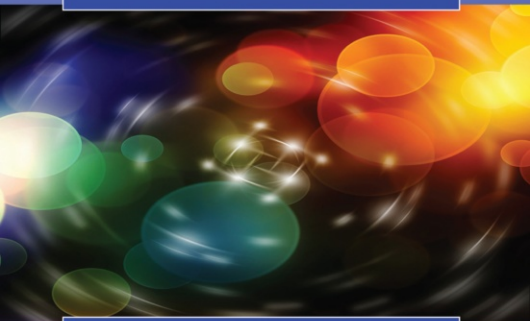
C A R E E R   D E V E L O P M E N T   S E R I E S

# Career Development and Systems Theory

**Connecting Theory and Practice**

3rd edition

Wendy Patton and Mary McMahon



*SensePublishers*

## **Career Development and Systems Theory**

## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERIES**

*Connecting Theory and Practice*

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### ***Scope***

Recent developments in the literature on career have begun to reflect a greater global reach and acknowledgement of an international/global understanding of career. These developments have demanded a more inclusive understanding of career as it is experienced by individuals around the world. Related issues within the career literature include the relationships within the career theory literature, or theory integration and convergence, and between theory and practice. The influence of constructivism is another influence which is receiving sustained attention within the field.

The series will be cutting edge in focusing on each of these areas, and will be truly global in its authorship and application. The primary focus of the series is the **theory-practice** nexus.

# Career Development and Systems Theory

Connecting Theory and Practice

*3rd Edition*

**Wendy Patton**

*Queensland University of Technology, Australia*

and

**Mary McMahon**

*The University of Queensland, Australia*



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## PREFACE

Between the first (1999) and second (2006) editions of this book, debate in the career field had remained largely unchanged despite new theoretical accounts being advanced. Following the publication of the second edition in 2006, the field has advanced in a number of ways, in particular with the emergence of postmodern influences in the field of career development, including subjectivity, perspectivity, multiple truths, interpretivism, and context. Multiplicity in meaning moves discussion from an objective self with measurable interests, abilities, values to one that is socially constructed within relationships and contexts. The overall influence of constructivism and social constructionism is a major addition to the field. There is still little disagreement within the career theory field that, while there are a number of theoretical propositions and models accounting for career behaviour, the field remains segmented, incomplete, and lacking in comprehensiveness and coherence. Each theory or model offers explanations about differing parts of the content and process of career development. Such a theoretical base, however, presents difficulties for practitioners working with clients.

The issue of theoretical integration or convergence has been debated in a broad and growing literature. A related debate within the career field is the relationship between theory and practice, with authors suggesting that practitioners either disregard theory because of its irrelevance, or adhere rigidly to one theory only because of the confusion engendered by trying to come to terms with many theories. More recently, in the context of an increasingly globalised society, the Eurocentric emphasis of career theory and practice and its transferability and cultural appropriateness to a broad range of populations has been questioned and examined.

It was against this background that we developed a metatheoretical framework for the integration of career theories using systems theory, and presented it in the first edition of this text. At that time we proposed the value of the Systems Theory Framework (STF) in developing a relationship between theory and practice, centred in the individual. While the challenge that originally drove the development of the STF was the desire to produce a metatheoretical framework through which the contribution of all theories could be recognised, its utility has become increasingly apparent through its application to a range of cultural groups and settings, qualitative assessment processes, career counselling, and multicultural career counselling. For these reasons, the STF continues to be a valuable addition to the field.

The principles of systems theory emphasise the self-organising nature of open systems. In viewing the field of career theory as a system, open to changes and developments from within itself and through constantly interrelating with other systems, we view the STF and this book as adding to the pattern of knowledge and relationships within the career field. The contents of this book will be integrated within the field as representative of a shift in understanding existing relationships within and between theories. In the same way, each reader will integrate the

## PREFACE

contents of the book within their existing views about the current state of career theory and within their current theory-practice relationship.

## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

In presenting this third edition of our book, we acknowledge advancement in the field since both the first and second international publications of the STF. In particular, we acknowledge the considerable influence of the social constructionist and constructivist worldviews in both theoretical formulations and also in practice. As with the first and second editions of our book, we begin with a comprehensive theoretical overview before presenting the metatheoretical Systems Theory Framework of career development. In the final section of the book, the integration of theory and practice is addressed through the application of the STF.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one, consisting of six chapters, presents a comprehensive review of the existing theoretical literature. While a number of comprehensive reviews of the literature exist (Betz, 2008; D. Brown & Associates, 2002; D. Brown & Brooks, 1990b, 1996b; S. D. Brown & Lent, 2005, 2013; Hackett & Lent, 1992; Hackett, Lent, & Greenhaus, 1991; Hartung & Subich, 2011; Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996; Walsh, Savickas, & Hartung, 2013), the present review traces the progress of career theory from content or process approaches to those which reflect both content and process, and illustrates its movement to pursue theory integration and convergence. We have continued with a very comprehensive historical overview even though some of the theoretical formulations have not been added to since the previous edition. We believe that a full account of theory assists in an overall understanding of the field.

Chapter one presents an overview of the field, and discusses the overall content and structure of the existing state of career theory. It has been significantly updated to reflect the new developments in existing theories and the new theoretical formulations emerging. Chapter two introduces theories focusing on content (of the individual and the context). It therefore traces the field from the work of Parsons to those theories characterised as trait and factor, and the more recent person-environment fit emphasis. It includes the work of Holland, Bordin, D. Brown, Dawis and Lofquist, and the work in Big 5 personality theory. Chapter three presents theories which focus on the process of career development, including the work of Ginzberg and his colleagues, Super, Tiedeman and O'Hara and Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman, L. S. Gottfredson, and the more recent work of Savickas. Theories which focus on content *and* process are reviewed in chapter four, including the work of L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz, K. E. Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz, Krumboltz' new happenstance learning theory, Roe, the social cognitive approach of Lent and his colleagues, the cognitive information processing models of Peterson, Sampson, Reardon and Lenz, the developmental-contextual approach of Vondracek, Lerner and Schulenberg and Vondracek and Porfeli, and the action approach of Young, Valach and Collin. A table illustrating the content and process influences on career development and the theories reviewed, their major foci in terms of influence, and the diversity and commonality

between and across them is presented at the end of each of chapters two through four. Chapter five presents an overview of these main theories, including a discussion of their similarities and differences. Finally, chapter six focuses on some of the areas which have been insufficiently dealt with in existing theories. It therefore reviews theories of women's career development (or women's working lives, as we have changed this descriptor to reflect the changes in this literature), and theories proposed to account for career development of racial and ethnic minorities, and other groups such as lesbians and gay men. It also reviews sociological theories which pay some attention to socioeconomic and related variables. In this third edition, chapter six includes two expanded discussions. It explores recent work on children's and adolescents' career development, and provides an updated overview of the increased focus on social justice in the field of career theory, in particular recent discussions on social class, and the recent focus on improving social and labour market integration for people with a disability.

Part two of the book consists of three chapters. It represents the theoretical core of the book, and links parts one and two. Chapter seven describes the philosophical underpinnings of the field, recent changes, and presents the history of previous integrative frameworks. It also outlines the moves toward integration and convergence in the career theory literature. Chapter eight describes the development of systems theory, and presents its important elements. The relationship between these elements and aspects of career theory and practice is included. Chapter nine presents a full outline of our Systems Theory Framework of career development, traces its development over a number of years, and documents its established position in the career theory and career practice literature. The discussion in this chapter emphasises the relationship of the framework with existing theories. An addition to this chapter is a section on the STF, culture and context that considers the western origins of the STF and its broader application in non-western contexts.

Part three of the book consists of five chapters which address the integration of theory and practice through the concept of lifelong learning systems. This part of the book attests to the utility of the Systems Theory Framework in practice as reflected through the expansion and refinement of its practical applications in career assessment, career counselling and career programs. A particular strength of the practical applications of the Systems Theory Framework is their foundation in learning which is viewed from constructivist and social constructionist perspectives. In particular, chapter 10 advances the concept of lifelong career development learning, emphasising the notion of career as being defined within the individual as learner. Chapter 11 examines the issue of learning from a systems theory perspective through the theme of learning systems, and presents the specific examples of the learning systems necessary for the training and preparation of career development facilitators and also of supervision. Chapters 12 and 13 apply the concept of learning systems to traditional career development learning settings. In particular, chapter 12 discusses career development learning in school settings, and chapter 13 describes career counselling as a process of learning from a systems



## PREFACE

theory perspective. Finally, chapter 14 examines new relationships between organisational and individual career systems.

The first edition of the present book was the first text to offer an encompassing framework for career theory convergence using a metatheoretical approach. The framework is presented in an unfolding series of graphic illustrations. Such illustrations are also included as representations of learning systems in part three, which also includes specific examples of the use of systems theory elements in teaching and learning, and in counselling. Another unique feature of the book is the presentation of tables which illustrate similarities and differences between theories.

While each of the chapters of the book can be read separately according to the learning needs of the individual learner, within systems theory thinking each of the chapters contributes to a whole, and have been written as such. The whole story of the book will be less meaningful without attention to each of the parts as the following themes have been infused throughout the book:

- development and change within career theories;
- the trend toward integration and convergence of career theories;
- the role of systems theory and the Systems Theory Framework;
- the embeddedness of systems theory in career practice; and
- the embeddedness of lifelong learning in career development.

In order to encourage your exploration of the whole book, we have made frequent references to related chapters or parts where we believe this will help you develop your own sense of patterns and relationships within the book and your existing knowledge.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The production of this third edition of our book is an example of systems theory at work. It has evolved over more than 20 years, and our revisions have been related to our interactions with each other and with members of our interconnected systems. Thus it has evolved through ongoing learning, co-construction of ideas, and developments of new meaning. The book represents our understanding at this point in time, an understanding which has evolved (and which continues to evolve) through our involvement in relational contexts.

Many people have been invaluable parts of our system in this process. We would especially like to thank our students and colleagues who have provided feedback and insight over many years. This third edition has been supported through the ongoing efforts of Famena Khaya and Rachel Grace and we are very appreciative.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

### **WENDY PATTON**

Wendy Patton is Professor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education at the Queensland University of Technology, a role she has held for 8 years. She has published extensively in the area of career development and is currently on the editorial advisory boards of a number of national and international career development journals. She is the Series Editor of the Sense Publishers' Career Development Series which has contributed 5 books to the field of career development and vocational psychology since 2006.

### **MARY MCMAHON**

Mary McMahon is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at The University of Queensland where she coordinates and teaches in the postgraduate career development field of studies. She publishes extensively in the field of career development and is on the editorial advisory boards of a number of national and international journals. Her research focuses on child and adolescent career development and constructivist approaches to career counselling and assessment.



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# **PART 1**

## **REVIEW OF EXISTING THEORIES**

### **CHAPTER 1**

RATIONALE FOR A SYSTEMS THEORY PERSPECTIVE

### **CHAPTER 2**

THEORIES FOCUSING ON CONTENT

### **CHAPTER 3**

THEORIES FOCUSING ON PROCESS

### **CHAPTER 4**

THEORIES FOCUSING ON CONTENT AND PROCESS

### **CHAPTER 5**

COMPARISON OF THE CURRENT THEORIES

### **CHAPTER 6**

THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT: WIDER EXPLANATIONS



## CHAPTER 1

### **RATIONALE FOR A SYSTEMS THEORY PERSPECTIVE**

Career development theory has had a relatively short history. In reflecting on this, Isaacson and D. Brown (1993) commented that “the behavioral sciences”, of which career development theory is a part, “are still in a developmental stage” (p. 20). This is not surprising since vocational guidance, the precursor to career counselling, did not begin until the early 1900s. Parsons (1909) is credited with being the founder of vocational guidance and his work has had a profound influence on career theory and practice. He identified three elements of career selection as being self-knowledge, knowledge of the world of work, and “true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts” (Parsons, 1909, p. 5).

Out of these beginnings, a number of theories which focused on the content of career choice, such as characteristics of the individual and of the workplace evolved and became known as the trait and factor theories. Subsequent development in these theories led to their being viewed as person-environment fit theories. Following this, theories which placed more emphasis on the stages and process of career development were proposed and became known as developmental theories. Theoretical work published during the 1980s and early 1990s focused on both content and process, including the interaction between these and the role of cognition in the process. More recently, theorists have focused on constructivist and social constructionist influences in career theory, as well as on approaches to convergence of the many career theories.

The broadening of the concept of career development has far outpaced the development of theory to account for it. However, Amundson (2005) asserted that recent advances in constructivism, systems theory, action theory and paradoxical theory have emerged to support individuals and counsellors in constructing personal development in a world of unprecedented and ongoing rapid changes occurring within the workplace and in individual careers. M. Watson and Stead (2006) echoed this view noting that “career theories reflect the times they were constructed in” and emphasising that “they need to be refined over time to reflect the realities of an everchanging macroenvironment”(p. 14). Similarly, Guichard and Lenz (2005) identified three main characteristics evident in the international career theory literature: “(a) emphasis on contexts and cultural diversities, (b) self-construction or development emphasis, and (c) a constructivist perspective” (p. 17).

The field of career development theory continues to attempt to present flexible and adaptive theory. Indeed the development and subsequent refinement of the Systems Theory Framework of career development (STF; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) represents such an attempt. The purpose of this book, as with its first and second editions (Patton & McMahon, 1999,

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2006a), is to locate the development of the STF as an advancement within the history and context of career development theory and also to illustrate its application to career development practice. There has been considerable theoretical, research and practice activity on the STF since 1999 – this will be discussed within relevant chapters within the book. It is the purpose of this chapter to set the scene for the following chapters by providing an overview of essential understandings which underpin the career development field and the book. This chapter will first examine understandings of the core concepts of career and career development around which the field is constructed. Following this, we will present an overview of the present status of career development theory and examine a structural framework for this body of work. The philosophical underpinnings of career development theory will then be outlined. Finally a brief rationale for the development of a systems theory approach to account for career development, the STF, will be described.

### DEFINITIONS

#### *The Meaning of 'Career'*

The meaning and definition of career is still understood differentially. This lack of conceptual clarity maintains ambiguity and continues to prevent a common ground in thinking in this area. It also means that developing theoretical understandings is difficult. From the time of Parsons (1909), the terms career, vocation, and occupation have often been used synonymously (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992) although D. S. Miller and McWhirter (2006) emphasised that the current literature provides for very real distinctions to the contemporary understanding of the terms work, career, and vocation. Traditional definitions have been criticised for their restriction of career to a professional work life which included advancement, and several researchers proposed the broadening of this conceptual definition to include prevocational and postvocational activities and other life roles and contexts. This broadening is reflected in the definition of career proposed by Super in 1976: "The sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout his preoccupational, occupational and postoccupational life; includes work related roles such as those of student, employee, and pensioner, together with complementary vocational, familial and civil roles" (p. 20). A more concise definition, that of M. B. Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989), describes career as "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (p. 8), again emphasising the centrality of the themes of work and time.

The term career has been criticised for its western middle class focus and the lack of its applicability across cultures and less developed countries (M. Watson & Stead, 2006). More recently the term 'work' has been applied to this area of human behaviour to provide a more inclusive and less conceptually and culturally complex term (Blustein, 2001, 2006; Richardson, 1993, 2000). Career and an understanding of human behaviour in the domain of work has largely been the realm of the field

of psychology and it is really only in the last 20 years that more broad understandings have been included within the literature.

The words which have common understanding in this field include ‘work’ which typically refers to the domain of life in which people, paid or unpaid, provide labour for an outcome of a service or a good. ‘Job’ refers to a specific work position which may be permanent full-time or part-time and in a particular role or organisation. ‘Career’ refers to the sequence of or collection of jobs held over an individual’s life, although in western societies it has traditionally been conceptualised as a linear sequence of “jobs” which have a vertical ‘advancement related’ trajectory. M. B. Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989), described career as “the evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time” (p. 8), Nicholson and West (1989) “recommend use of the more neutral term ‘work histories’ to denote sequences of job experiences and reserve the term ‘career’ for the sense people make of them” (p. 181).

Psychologists have referred to work as a means through which individuals “implement a self-concept” (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996, p. 139). Writers in the organisation development field have referred to careers as “individual expressions of identity” (Inkson & Elkin, 2008, p. 76). It is these views that have been subject to criticism, with assertions that the term career implies choice and privilege and that much work does not afford a subjective sense of career and identity. Many individuals work for survival and this work may not contribute to any more than need fulfillment, as opposed to personal and public identity and fulfilling a “calling” (Blustein, 2006).

A related change in the literature concerns the role of the individual in his/her career, and in our understanding of career. In 1959, Tyler challenged the field of psychology to focus more on what she referred to as “a psychology of individuality” (p. 81) rather than a psychology of individual differences. In doing so she asserted that “each person is a self-made *man*. At each stage of our lives we impose limits on the next stage, by the choices we make and the ways in which we organize what we have experienced. There is an important something that each individual must do for *himself*” (p. 81). Tyler was setting the scene for the importance of focusing on the individual’s role in his/her own development. The uniqueness of the individual in career, as opposed to individual differences, has extended in its influence. Miller-Tiedeman (1988, 1999) and Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) discussed the concept of lifecareer which incorporates the integration of career and other aspects of an individual’s life. Again, this theme resonates within other constructions of career, with Collin and Watts (1996) discussing the need to focus on career as a subjective construction of the individual rather than as something that is objective, and Herr (1992) emphasising that careers do not exist as jobs or occupations do, rather they are created by individuals. We concur with these constructions of career, perceiving that individuals careers are developed by them on the basis of their perceptions of, attitudes toward, and actions in relation to, career. Patton and McMahon (1999) defined career as “the pattern of influences that coexist in an individual’s life over time” (p. 170). The definition posited by Reardon, Lenz, Sampson and Peterson (2009) also

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emphasises the individual, work-life, and time in a broad view – “a time extended working out of a purposeful life pattern through work undertaken by the person” (p. 6). These themes are also reflected in Savickas’ (2002) definition, which also emphasises the objective-subjective distinction – “career denotes a reflection on the course of one’s vocational behavior, rather than vocational behavior itself. This reflection can focus on actual events such as one’s occupations (objective career) or on their meaning (subjective career)” (p. 152).

Extending this focus on the individual, and incorporating contextual challenges, Richardson (1993, 2000) suggested that career is a limited and irrelevant concept and subject to a middle class bias in perception and ideology. She proposed that focus should be on how people make their own meaning of work in their lives, and suggested that we should use the terms work, jobs and career in our discussion of work and career. Richardson (1993) defined work broadly as human activity that is initiated “for individual success and satisfaction, to express achievement and strivings, to earn a living... to further ambitions and self-assertions... and to link individuals to a larger social good” (p. 428). More recently Richardson and Schaeffer (2013) emphasised that the connection between paid work and career is an artifact of the rise of capitalism. The literature has not included discussion about care work until quite recently. Talking about unpaid work, care work, is a significant challenge to the social values understood within a capitalist hegemony. These authors proposed a dual model of working that addresses both market work and unpaid care work, emphasising that there are two kinds of work and that both are equally important.

The new model we propose is not a model that simply stitches together prevailing ways of talking and thinking about work and career into some kind of new arrangement or organisational structure. Instead, this new model challenges the prevailing discourse regarding how most people talk about and experience the work in their lives, that is, as career, and proposes that they talk about and experience this part of their lives as market work instead of career. It also proposes a second domain of work, that is, unpaid care work that most people, at least at this point, are not likely to talk about or experience as work at all. What we are proposing then is a radical reconfiguration of how people talk about and experience essential components of their lives having to do with the work they do. (p. 25)

Blustein (2001, 2006) also challenged the conventional language and understanding of work and career, acknowledging that the majority of women and men have limited choice in the work they undertake to support themselves and their families. He proposed that we develop a more inclusive psychology of working which addresses the limited way the field has addressed issues of gender, social class, family background, cultural characteristics and their impact on career development. Even for those with the privilege of choice, these factors may limit the range of alternatives.

In addition to these conceptual changes, much of the context in which work occurs has been significantly changed through political and economic impacts.

These contextual factors which are challenging structures of career opportunity are felt globally, and include political, economic, technological, demographic, nature and structure of work and organisational changes (see Inkson, 2007, for a comprehensive summary). These changes impact our understanding of the interaction between individual and organisational careers (Collin & Patton, 2009a; Patton & Collin, 2009). The emphasis has been shifted from the organisation to individual agency as crucial in developing a 21<sup>st</sup> career with notions of protean (Hall, 1996; Hall & las Heras, 2009) and boundaryless careers (M. B. Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan & M. B. Arthur, 2006) creating positions within the literature. The concept of protean career refers to the notion that in order to adapt and survive in a changing world, the individual needs to be self-generating, that is, protean. The protean career displaces the notion of a linear and vertical career and acknowledges flexible and idiosyncratic career construction or career building; it includes all aspects of an individual's life as relevant to career, and places the individual at the centre of career and organisational and occupational contexts. This notion of career is also closely related to the boundaryless career (M. B. Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) which emphasises that career is about individuals organising their careers, not organisations, and that the enactment of career reflects an intersection of self-organising and social phenomena (Littleton, M. B. Arthur & Rousseau, 2000). Sullivan and M. B. Arthur (2006) have extended this discussion to note the importance of what they term physical (actual movement across jobs, organisations through to countries) and psychological mobility (a mobile mindset) for successful negotiation of boundaryless careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### *Career Development*

These broader definitions of career draw attention to the concept of career development which D.Brown and Brooks (1990b) described as being “for most people a lifelong process of getting ready to choose, choosing, and typically continuing to make choices from among the many occupations available in our society” (p. xvii). The concept of career development was first advanced by Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma (1951) who proposed that occupational choice is a developmental process that occurs over a number of years. Their original theory, which assumed that the process was completed in early adulthood, was later revised to recognise occupational choice as a lifelong process of decision making (Ginzberg, 1972, 1984). The importance of acknowledging career development over the lifespan is incorporated in the following definition: “Career development is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic and chance factors that combine to shape the career of an individual over the life span” (Sears, 1982, p. 139). Super's (1980) work included other life roles in his discussion of lifelong career development. Similarly recent work on relational and cultural influences on career development (Blustein, 2011; Richardson, 2012a,b; Schultheiss, 2009) emphasise the broader understandings we need to adopt when discussing work and career, and therefore career development.

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A number of authors have identified the social and cultural shift which has impacted work life (Amundson, 2005; Savickas, 2000a; Storey, 2000). As such the notion of career development is also undergoing a significant paradigm shift (Hartung, 2002; P. S. Jarvis, 2003) from talking about career development to development through work and other life roles. The previous discussion about career has emphasized the increasing focus on life roles other than work. As such more recent discussions of career development incorporate broader notions – “Career development ... connotes a continuous stream of career-relevant events that are not necessarily linear or positive in impact and that may or may not be subject to personal agency (e.g., being born into poverty, losing a job due to the bankruptcy of one’s company)” (S. D. Brown & Lent, 2013, p. 10). These authors also note that development may involve forward and backward movements.

The changing macroenvironment emphasises that we are in an era of “do-it-yourself career management” where individuals are being challenged to play a greater role in constructing their own career development, an era where “Careers are now forged, not foretold” (Watts, 1996c, p. 46). Similarly, Savickas et al. (2009) have more recently used the term ‘life designing’ to describe the process of individuals constructing their careers. Younger workers are encouraged to act as free agents, developing personal enterprises and marketing personal skills. Individuals increasingly need to focus on employability rather than job security, and learn the skills which will assist them in taking responsibility for the direction and evolution of their own careers. What needs to be created as secure is the individual, and the individual’s knowledge and skill currency, not the job. Career development is now viewed as multi-directional and multi-levelled.

As a result of this change in focus from linear career development, Amundson, Parker, and M. B. Arthur (2002) discussed “a continuing tension between leveraging past experience and positioning for future opportunity” (p. 27). They emphasised the imperative for individuals to learn to intentionally act on environments of change, drawing on an understanding of the individual as a self-organising, active system – “The common thread is that people make sense of the world of work through subjective interpretation of their own career experience. In living through the complexity of economic life, they draw new insights and formulate new strategies that make sense of this complexity” (Amundson et al., p. 27).

A number of authors have proposed alternatives to the notion of career development. For example, Redekopp and Day (1999) suggested that career building is more useful than career planning in an environment where an individual needs to take charge of short term goals and continuous decision-making, building on previous life/work activities with a direction in mind, and allowing all the while for serendipity [defined by Redekopp and Day as “the act of discovering something useful while one is pursuing something else”, p. 276]. In a similar vein, Savickas (2002, 2005, 2013a) referred to career construction and Hache, Redekopp and P. S. Jarvis (2000) used the term ‘life/work design’ in identifying the career development competencies required by individuals to manage their learning and work across the lifespan.

The inseparability of work and life and the ongoing interrelationship between career and life has been recognised. Wolfe and D. A. Kolb (1980) presented a definition of career development that remains relevant today.

Career development involves one's whole life, not just occupation. As such, it concerns the whole person ... More than that, it concerns him or her in the ever-changing contexts of his or her life. The environmental pressures and constraints, the bonds that tie him or her to significant others, responsibilities to children and aging parents, the total structure of one's circumstances are also factors that must be understood and reckoned with. In these terms, career development and personal development converge. Self and circumstances – evolving, changing, unfolding in mutual interaction – constitute the focus and the drama of career development. (Wolfe & D. A. Kolb, 1980, pp. 1-2)

We continue to favour this dynamic definition, which encompasses the individual, the environment, interaction and change, as representing the key elements of a definition of career development.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORY

For over two decades authors have highlighted the developmental infancy of career development theory (e.g., D. Brown, 1990; Hackett & Lent, 1992; Isaacson & Brown, 1993). While theoretical propositions and models have proliferated, conclusions within the literature generally agree that it remains inadequate and incomplete and lacking in comprehensiveness and coherence (D. Brown, 1990, 2002a; S. D. Brown & Lent, 2005; Savickas, 2002, 2009a), in particular in its failure to account for diversity within the population (Blustein, 2006, 2011; Richardson, 1993, 2000, 2012a,b). In addition, it has been criticised for focusing on intraindividual issues to the detriment of contextual issues (D. Brown, 2002d; Collin & Young, 1986; Lent, 2001; Leong, 1995; Savickas, 2013a), and for being hampered by an overlap in conceptualisation of many elements (F. H. Borgen, 1991; Osipow, 1990; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) and a proliferation of models (Guichard & Lenz, 2005). The need to focus on work in a changing global world has also received attention (Krieshok, Motl, & Rutt, 2011; Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, & Peterson, 2011).

Further, career theory has been criticised for being segmented both within the individual theoretical models (Super, 1990) and within the disciplinary field (M. B. Arthur, Hall, & Lawrence, 1989; S.D. Brown & Lent, 2005; Hackett et al., 1991). For example, Super (1990) acknowledged that his theoretical formulation was segmental and represented a concerted effort to bring together concepts from various branches of psychology and S. D. Brown and Lent commented that career counsellors also need to access theories from personality and industrial-organisational psychology to have a more complete picture of career theory. In a similar vein, Jepsen (1996) spoke about career theorists as an “academic psychologist’s club” (p. 144), although he acknowledged that this is changing as the work of theorists from other disciplines is being recognised (e.g., M. B. Arthur,

Hall, & Lawrence, 1989; Hall, 1996; Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996) and as more integrated models across disciplines are being proposed (e.g., Collin & Patton, 2009b; Guichard, 2005; Vondracek & Porfeli, 2002a). More recently, a number of writers have lamented the focus of traditional career theorising and have suggested the need to incorporate other psychologies into theoretical discussions. These include lifespan psychology (Vondracek, 2001) and organisational-industrial psychology (Collin & Patton, 2009b; G. D. Gottfredson, 2001). In reflecting on the growth of career development theory, Osipow (1983) commented that “vocational psychology seems to be moving towards a collection of miniature theories, each dealing with circumscribed, explicit segments of vocational behavior ...” (p. 323). This notion of miniature theories seems to have been an accurate prediction of the trend in career development theory. In 1996, Osipow and Fitzgerald maintained that little had changed. Despite this disparate picture, Osipow (1983) acknowledged the emerging nature of career development theory and assured researchers and practitioners that an incomplete theory is better than no theory. In addition, several authors (e.g., L. S. Gottfredson, 1983) have commented on the importance of the contributions made by the existing theories to our overall understanding of career behaviour. We believe that a comprehensive book on career theory needs to provide the historical journey that the field has travelled.

As we prepared this third edition of the book, it was illustrative to note just how much recent attention has been forged in some of these particular areas. The field of career theory has experienced considerable growth in recent years, and while some theoretical formulations have been afforded reduced importance (e.g., Ginzberg, 1984; Roe & Lunneborg, 1990), others have been expanded and refined (e.g., Hartung, 2013b; Holland, 1985a, 1992, 1997; Nauta, 2010, 2013; Super, 1990, 1992; Super et al., 1996), and still more have been and continue to be developed (e.g., D. Brown, 1996a, 2002b, c; Krumboltz, 2009, 2011; Krumboltz, Foley, & Cotter, 2013; Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent & S. D. Brown, 2002, 2008; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, & Peterson, 2011; Savickas, 2001, 2002, 2005; 2013a; Valach & Young, 2009; Young, Valach, & Collin, 1996, 2002; Young, Domene, & Valach, 2014).

Career development theory in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is responding to challenges from three key issues – the need for integration or convergence of theories, the importance of including other fields in this integration, and the influence of constructivism and social constructionism. Theorists have acknowledged the value to be gained from attempting to provide a more integrative theoretical picture of career development. Noting the disparate nature of the plethora of existing theories, and the need to use more than one theory to describe the complexity of career development, the concept of integration or convergence within career development theory emerged over two decades ago (F. H. Borgen, 1991; Osipow, 1990) and promises to remain one of the key issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in this field. Each of these authors identified similarities and differences within current theoretical explanations. Osipow noted how their evolution is toward a similar theoretical picture, although the importance of various elements and themes varied in different



theories. Other authors have called for the integration of career theory through the development of an overarching theory or framework of career development (Dawis, 1994; Hackett et al., 1991).

Convergence in career development theory was the specific focus of a 1992 conference, papers from which were published in Savickas and Lent (1994). This conference illustrated the importance of the trend toward integration between career theories, despite varying views of the definition of convergence, its value, and the form it might take. D. Brown and Brooks (1996b) remained sceptical about the likelihood of convergence among theories and the emergence of an integrated theory, a position reiterated by D. Brown (2002a). This issue will be explored in more detail in chapter 7.

Integrating vocational psychology with other fields is another key issue. The second edition of this book addressed this in an additional chapter in 2006. Subsequently, Collin and Patton (2009b) drew together authors writing from vocational psychology and organisational psychology to work toward a multidisciplinary dialogue on career. This key issue will be addressed further in chapter 14.

A third key issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be the increasing influence of constructivism and social constructionism. A monograph was devoted to social constructionism in vocational psychology and career development (McIlveen & Schultheiss, 2012) with chapters focusing on the self, social constructionist theories, philosophical understandings, and practice. Savickas (2013b) asserted that he has used social constructionism to integrate the segmental theories of career development. Patton (2008) claimed that career construction theory and the Systems Theory Framework are the only two theoretical positions wherein both the influence of convergence and social constructionism are evident. Further work to demonstrate the integration and the influence of social constructionism, and the importance and value of theoretical developments learning from and building on each other have also been identified. These include connecting the STF and relational theory (Patton, 2007a); testing theoretical integration as demonstrated by STF and dialogical self theory (McIlveen, 2007b); reflections on similarities and differences between career construction theory and the STF (Patton, 2008); and identifying the joint contributions of contextual action theory and the STF to career counselling (Patton, 2014). These theoretical discussions will be expanded in chapter 7.

In acknowledging the importance of this trend toward integration and convergence, we developed and refined the STF (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). Fundamental to the development of the STF is our belief that systems theory can provide the basis of an overarching framework within which commonalities and relationships in existing career development theory can be identified. The issue of integration and convergence will be expanded in chapter 7, and the Systems Theory Framework will be outlined in chapter 9 following an explanation of systems theory in chapter 8.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE STRUCTURE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORY

This section provides an overview of the structure of career theory and presents the framework within which the theories will be discussed in more detail later in part one. The segmental nature of career development theory discussed previously is reflected in attempts to categorise and group the theories. Herr and Cramer (1992) identified eight different groupings which had been offered by a number of authors, including those of Crites (1969) and Osipow (1968). Other authors who have proffered categories or groupings of career theories include Osipow (1990), Herr and Cramer (1992), Minor (1992), Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996), and Patton and McMahon (1999, 2006a). These categories are depicted in [Table 1.1](#).

*Table 1.1 Categories of career theories*

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Categories</i>
Crites (1969)	Psychological theories Non-psychological theories
Osipow (1968)	Trait and factor approaches Sociology and career choice Self-concept theory Vocational choice and personality theories
Herr & Cramer (1992)	Trait and factor Actuarial or matching Decision Situational or sociological Psychological, and developmental
Osipow & Fitzgerald (1996)	Trait-factor Society and career choice Developmental/self-conceptions Vocational choice and personality Behavioural
Osipow (1990)	Developmental Trait oriented Reinforcement based Personality focused.
Minor (1992)	Theories of content Theories of process

## RATIONALE FOR SYSTEMS THEORY PERSPECTIVE

Patton & McMahon (1999, 2006a)	Theories of content Theories of process Theories of content and process Wider explanations
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In reflecting on the different groupings, Herr and Cramer (1992) commented that “the categories depicted are not mutually exclusive or independent, but they attempt to explain differential career behavior and choice from somewhat different vantage points” (p. 156). Hackett et al. (1991) noted that “theories generally highlight the content and/or process of decision making ...” (p. 4). As indicated in [Table 1.1](#), we have chosen content and process as the “vantage point” (Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 156) in categorising career development theories, a structure also adopted by Minor (1992). Historically, career development theory focused on either content or process. Content refers to the influences on career development, such as interests and values, and process refers to accounts of change over time and decision making processes. Clearly, there is no agreement on the categorisation as evidenced in [Table 1.1](#). Indeed, Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) acknowledged the arbitrariness of their categorisation. However, similarities between categories are reflected in [Table 1.1](#).

Chapters 2-6 provide a comprehensive historical overview of the extant theories and their evolution. In some theoretical fields, considerable growth and development has occurred, while in others there has been little theoretical expansion/refinement. The categories we used to structure the review of career development theory contained in chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6 of the first edition of this book were theories of content, theories of process, theories of content and process, and wider explanations. In the second edition, we added the category of constructivist approaches. In this third edition, we have acknowledged the complexity of the constructivist/social constructionist terms and have therefore used both as a category name (Young & Collin, 2004). We have also acknowledged the extension of Social Learning Career Theory (SLTC) to Happenstance Learning Theory (HLT) (Krumboltz, 2011; Krumboltz et al., 2013). The theories contained in each category are indicated in [Table 1.2](#). Each category will now be briefly described.

*Table 1.2 Structure of career theory*

<i>Theories of Content</i>	
Trait and factor theory	Parsons (1909)
Theory of personality	Holland (1973, 1985a, 1992, 1997); Nauta (2010, 2013)
Psychodynamic theory	Bordin (1990)
Values-based theory	D. Brown (1996a, 2002b, c)

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Work adjustment person-environment correspondence theory	Dawis & Lofquist (1984); Dawis (1996, 2002, 2005)
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Five factor theory	McCrae & John (1992); McCrae & Costa (1996, 2008)
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### *Theories of Process*

Developmental theory	Ginzberg et al. (1951); Ginzberg (1972, 1984)
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Life span life-space theory	Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994); Super et al. (1996); Hartung (2013b)
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Theory of circumscription and compromise	L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005)
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Individualistic approach	Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman (1990); Miller-Tiedeman (1999)
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### *Theories of Content and Process*

Social learning career theory (SLTC)	L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz (1990, 1996)
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Happenstance Learning Theory (HLT)	Krumboltz (2009, 2011); Krumboltz et al., 2013)
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Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)	Lent et al. (1996, 2002); Lent & Brown (2002); Lent (2005, 2013)
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Cognitive Information Processing Approach (CIP)	Peterson, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz (1996); Peterson Sampson, Lenz, & Reardon (2002); Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, & Peterson (2011); Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz (2004)
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Developmental-contextual approach	Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg (1986); Vondracek & Porfeli (2008)
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Contextual approach to career	Young, Valach & Collin (1996, 2002); Valach & Young (2009); Young, Domene, & Valach (2014)
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Personality development and career choice	Roe (1956); Roe & Lunneborg (1990)
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### *Wider Explanations*

Women's career development	Astin (1984); Hackett & Betz, (1981); Betz (2005); Farmer (1985, 1997); Betz & Fitzgerald
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#### RATIONALE FOR SYSTEMS THEORY PERSPECTIVE

	(1987); Cook, Heppner, & O'Brien (2002a, b); Richardson & Schaeffer (2013); Schultheiss (2009, 2013)
Racial and ethnic groups	Arbona (1996); D. Brown (2002b); Hackett, Lent, & Greenhaus, (1991); E. J. Smith (1983)
Sexual orientation	Fitzgerald & Betz (1994); K. Morgan & L. Brown (1991)
Sociological or situational approaches	Roberts (1977, 2005, 2012); Blau & Duncan (1967); M. J. Miller (1983); Hotchkiss & Borow (1996); Johnson & Mortimer (2002)

#### *Constructivist /Social Constructionist Approaches*

Systems Theory Framework	McMahon & Patton (1995); Patton & McMahon (1997, 1999, 2006a)
Career construction theory	Savickas (2001, 2002, 2005, 2011a, b, 2013a)
Chaos theory	Pryor & Bright (2003a, b, 2011)
Ecological approach Narrative	Conyne & Cook (2004a) Bujold (2004); L. Cochran (1997); McIlveen & Patton (2007a, b)
Relational/Cultural	Blustein (2001, 2006, 2011); Schultheiss (2009) Schultheiss (2013)
Contextual Action theory	(see under Theories of content and process)

#### *Theories of Content*

Content refers to the influences on career development which are either intrinsic to the individual themselves or emanate from within the context in which the individual lives. In general, individual influences have been afforded more attention in career theory than contextual influences. Major theories focusing on the 'content' of career development include the psychological approaches of trait and factor theory (Holland, 1973, 1985a, 1992, 1997; Parsons, 1909), Bordin's (1990) psychodynamic theory, D. Brown's (1996 a, 2002 b,c) values-based theory, the work adjustment person-environment correspondence theory (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Dawis, 1996, 2002, 2005), and the personality based five factor theory (McCrae & John, 1992; McCrae & Costa, 1996, 2008). Theories of content will be described in more detail in chapter 2.

## CHAPTER 1

### *Theories of Process*

Process refers to interaction and change over time and is depicted in some theories as a series of stages through which individuals pass. The stage or developmental theories of Ginzberg and his colleagues (1951), Ginzberg (1972, 1984) and Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994) have attempted to account for the process of career development. While L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005) specifically attempted to include both content and process variables into her model, she has been categorised with the process theories as she focused on developmental stages. This categorisation of her work as developmental has also been made by others (D. Brown, 1996b, 2002a; Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). The work of Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990; Miller-Tiedeman, 1999) also focused on stages and is included in this grouping. Theories of process will be described in more detail in chapter 3.

### *Theories of Content and Process*

More recently the need for theory to take into account both content (characteristics of the individual and the context), and process (their development and the interaction between them), has been recognised. Theoretical models based on the social learning theory, conceptualised as the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986), include the learning theory of L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990, 1996) and the Happenstance Learning Theory (Krumboltz, 2009, 2011; Krumboltz et al., 2013), the social cognitive perspective (SCCT; Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent & S. D. Brown, 2002; Lent, S. D. Brown & Hackett, 1996, 2002), and the cognitive information processing approach (CIP; Peterson, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz, 1996; Peterson, Sampson, Lenz, & Reardon, 2002; Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, & Peterson, 2011). Context based approaches include Vondracek, Lerner and Schulenberg's (1986) developmental-contextual approach, and the contextual approach to career (Young, Valach, & Collin, 1996, 2002; Valach & Young, 2009; Young, Domene, & Valach 2014). In addition, we include the work of Roe (1957; Roe & Lunneborg, 1990) in this section as her work included content of the individual and of the context. Theories of content and process will be described in more detail in chapter 4.

### *Wider Explanations*

Much of the existing theory has been criticised for not adequately taking into account issues of socioeconomic status, women and racial and ethnic groups, and other minority groups such as lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgendered individuals, and people with disabilities. Thus, a body of theory has been developed to attempt to explain the career development issues of individuals in these groups. In particular, Astin (1984), Hackett and Betz (1981), Betz (2005), Farmer (1985, 1997), Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) and Cook et al. (2002a, b) have presented theoretical explanations for the career development of women. While

sociological or situational approaches are often categorised as content and process theories, we have included them in this section focusing on issues which have received too little attention. In particular, we focus on the work of Roberts (1977, 2005, 2012), Blau and Duncan (1967), M. J. Miller (1983), Hotchkiss and Borow (1996) and Johnson and Mortimer (2002).

Theorising about career development of racial and ethnic groups is at a particularly early stage of development (Arbona, 1996; D. Brown, 2002b; Hackett et al., 1991; E. J. Smith, 1983). While broader theories have attempted to acknowledge the effects of race (e.g., L. S. Gottfredson, 1981; Super, 1990), these perspectives generally have not been integrated within their theoretical models. L. S. Gottfredson's (1986) concept of 'at risk' factors in career choice, while proposed as a framework for assessment and intervention in career counselling, is especially useful in considering the barriers to career choice of factors such as gender, sexual orientation, racial/ethnic minority, disability, and socioeconomic status. More recently D. Brown (2002b) has proposed the integration of culture into his theory of work values.

Another "major individual difference category" (p. 112) identified by Fitzgerald and Betz (1994) is that of sexual orientation. K. Morgan and L. Brown (1991) discussed three theories of women's career development (Astin, 1984; Farmer, 1985; L. S. Gottfredson, 1981) and identified propositions from which practitioners can extract relevant elements in working with lesbians and gay men. The authors stressed, however, that existing theories in general are inapplicable to the career development concerns of lesbians and gay men. Ragins (2004) developed an identity based theory of lesbian, gay and bisexual careers. More recently, Prince (2013) has attempted to evaluate existing theories in relation to their usefulness with lesbians and gay men, although he concludes that the literature is limited. These wider explanations will be described in more detail in chapter 6. More recently, there has been increased attention to career development of children and adolescents, career development for individuals with a disability, and social justice issues in career development. These areas of focus, new to this edition of the book, are also included in chapter 6.

The work of Blustein (2006, 2011), Richardson and Schaeffer (2013) and Schultheiss (2009, 2013) have challenged the literature in relation to the relevance of existing theories to a broad culturally and socioeconomically diverse population. We will discuss this work within chapter 6, although it will be discussed also under integrative frameworks in chapter 7.

### *Constructivist/Social Constructionist Approaches*

More recently, theoretical propositions have emerged that clearly reflect the influence of the constructivist worldview with its emphasis on holism and the individual as central to the construction of their lives and careers. Such theoretical propositions include the Systems Theory Framework of career development (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a), career construction theory (Savickas, 2005, 2013a), the chaos theory of careers (Pryor & Bright,

2003a, b, 2011) and ecological career theory (Conyne & Cook, 2004a). In identifying social constructionist theories in vocational psychology, Young and Popadiuk (2012) acknowledged that constructivism and social constructionism have both generated a number of perspectives which enhance our understanding of career. Further to Young and Collin's (2004) assertion that the terms are used similarly, Young and Popadiuk commented that the perspectives identified "reflect a social explanation for the construction of career" (p. 11). It is interesting that authors themselves use the terms interchangeably. For example, Savickas (2005) labelled career construction theory as constructivist and referred to using social constructionism to unite segmented career theories in 2013. While emphasising that these were theoretical approaches or perspectives, not necessarily theories, Young and Popadiuk listed the following within their categorisation, and we have included these in our book: narrative (Bujold, L. Cochran, Savickas, McIlveen, & Patton); relational (Blustein, Schultheiss); systems theory (Patton & McMahon), cultural (Blustein, we would add Schultheiss, 2013) and contextual action theory (Young, Collin, & Valach) (see [Table 1.2](#) for full references). Constructivist/social constructionist approaches will be described in more detail in chapter 7.

#### *Issues Related to Categorisation*

Some theoretical models are less easily categorised into one group. For example, L. S. Gottfredson's (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005) circumscription and compromise theory proposed a stage model of the development of the self-concept, but also included contextual variables. It could therefore be grouped with the theories of content and process. The model proposed by Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) also focused on context and proposes a stage approach to an individual's career choice and implementation. Both of these theories have been grouped within the developmental theories in this text.

The work of Vondracek et al. (1986) also drew heavily from the principles of developmental psychology, although we have grouped it with the theories of content and process. In raising the importance of environmental variables, the work of L. S. Gottfredson has also been classified under social systems perspectives by other authors. In addition, its acknowledgment within theories of career development of women and racial and ethnic groups has been noted.

Within our earlier editions, contextual action theory was grouped under Theories of Content and Process. Young and Popadiuk (2012) have identified this work as social constructionist.

Just as there is no agreement in the literature on the grouping of career development theories, there also is no agreement on which theories remain the most influential. The review by Osipow (1990) focused on the work of Holland, Super, Dawis and Lofquist, and Krumboltz. Watkins (1994a) referred to "the real Big Five", the theoretical models of Bordin, Dawis and Lofquist, Holland, Krumboltz, and Super, as those which continue to be strongly influential. The third edition of D. Brown and Brooks (1996a) restricted theories to those which are "currently influencing either research or practice" (p. ix), and included the work of



Holland, Dawis, Super, L. S. Gottfredson, Krumboltz, and sociological approaches. Theoretical perspectives characterised as emerging included D. Brown's values-based model, social cognitive (Lent et al., 1996) and cognitive information processing (Peterson et al., 1996) approaches, and the contextual approach of Young et al. (1996).

It is also important to note just which theories remain as key in the US and international literature. Writing in the *International Handbook of Career Guidance* (Athanasou & Van Esbroeck, 2008), Leung (2008) identified the following theories as the "big five", acknowledging that they are all theories developed in the US – Dawis and Lofquist's Theory of Work Adjustment, Holland's personality and work environment theory, Super's life-span life-space theory and Savickas's extension and update, career construction theory, L. S. Gottfredson's circumscription and compromise theory and Lent and colleagues' social cognitive career theory. The first edition of the text by S. D. Brown and Lent (2005), *Career Development and Counseling: Putting Theory and Research to Work*, included the theories of Dawis, Holland, Savickas, L. S. Gottfredson and Lent and his colleagues. The theories presented in the second edition (S. D. Brown & Lent, 2013) include these theories but not that of L. S. Gottfredson. In her review of vocational theories, Betz (2008) focused on "those theories that have received the most empirical attention over roughly the past 10 years: Holland's theory, social cognitive career theory, and developmental-contextual theories" (p. 357). Betz also acknowledged the inclusion of the theory of work adjustment and L. S. Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise. Similarly Hartung and Subich (2011) focused on what they termed the "predominant theoretical models of career choice and development: person-environment fit (P-E fit), developmental, socio-cognitive-behavioral, and constructionist" (p. 6). The differential focus on theories in major texts was also noted in Walsh, Savickas and Hartung's (2013) 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Handbook of Vocational Psychology*.

This continuing focus on traditional theoretical formulations has drawn a number of criticisms. Reardon et al. (2011) have been critical of the restricted attention given to new and developing theoretical formulations – "In addition, there appears to be an inherent bias or selectivity regarding which knowledge or theories merit attention in the field of vocational psychology. CIP theory provides an example of failure to use new knowledge available in the literature" (p. 243). These authors go on to emphasise that while CIP theory has been "identified as a 'career theory' in at least eight major career textbooks and other professional books, and its development, research, and application to practice is documented in a 20 page bibliography ... it is noticeably absent in other publications ..." (p. 243). We would concur with what we see as a narrow and very selective view of the available theory for review and understanding of career behaviour – we note that this is the third edition of the present book and the STF has drawn considerable attention in many countries with both its theoretical approach and its application to practice and research; Blustein published a book on the psychology of working perspective in 2006, a perspective which has drawn much attention in research and practice suggestions; Pryor and Bright published a book on their chaos theory of

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careers in 2011, again a perspective which has drawn considerable research and practice support; and two books on contextual action theory and its application to practice have been published (Young, Domene, & Valach, 2014; Young, Marshall, Valach, Domene, Graham, & Zaidman-Zait, 2011), building on a strong research and practice literature.

Another perspective on this criticism may be to look at some of the previous work that has not received attention, until recently. Savickas (2013b) acknowledged the work of Leona Tyler and her move to criticise individual differences in psychology and an ultimate call to focus on individuality. Similarly, Savickas (2008a) acknowledged the early work of David Tiedeman, acknowledging that as “the first psychologist to systematically apply constructivist epistemology to the comprehension of careers, Tiedeman broke with intellectual traditions to lead the counseling profession in a new direction” (p. 217). Savickas further commented that Tiedeman should be acknowledged as “the prime engineer of career construction” (p. 223), the theory that Savickas has been developing. It may be that new theoretical formulations need to continue to press their place in the literature to emphasise the insights that they can bring to our theory, research and practice.

Acknowledging the difficulty in categorisation and in ascertaining influence, D. Brown (2002a) named all theories as being derived from the disciplines of psychology and sociology and from the philosophical underpinnings of logical positivism and social constructionism. The theories included in the 2002 (4th) edition of D. Brown’s book include sociological perspectives (Johnson & Mortimer), developmental and postmodern theories (L. S. Gottfredson, Savickas, Young, Valach, & Collin), theories anchored in learning theory (Lent, S. D. Brown, & Hackett, Peterson et al.), and trait-factor theories (Holland, Dawis, D. Brown). Savickas’ (2002) work is the new theory derived from Super’s developmental theory and career construction theory. The 4<sup>th</sup> edition omitted the work of Krumboltz as it had had limited research focus.

In attempting to trace the progress of career development theory away from either content or process thinking to a more integrated perspective, the review which follows in chapters 2 through 6 provides as comprehensive a review as possible. Further, like the review of Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) and the focus of both the first and second editions of this book, we take a broad view of what is important and influential in career development theory. We include a large number of theories, with the aim of focusing on the attention each has played in the development of the body of literature referred to as career development theory. In particular, we will attempt to focus on how each theory has developed in response to others, and the similarities and differences between them. We believe all theories have a place in our understanding of career behaviour.

### *Philosophical Underpinnings of Our Understandings of Career*

Traditional theorising about career has focused on identification of various relevant constructs and attempts to relate them to career behaviour. More recent approaches

have emphasised that “the complexities that occur within and among the intrapersonal traits and interpersonal interactions are simply too complicated to understand and therefore, we should stop trying to do it, except on an individual basis” (Brown, 2002a, p. xii). Such difference in career theories may be accounted for by the philosophical positions or worldviews that underpin them.

For most of its history, understandings of career have been influenced by the logical positivist worldview which emphasises rationality based on an objective value free knowledge; objectivity over subjectivity, facts over feelings. Logical positivism is underpinned by the following core assumptions: that individual behaviour is observable, measurable and linear; that individuals can be studied separately from their environments; and that the contexts within which individuals live and work are of less importance than their actions. The trait and factor theories illustrate the assumptions of logical positivism. Positivists emphasise rationality based on an objective value free knowledge; objectivity over subjectivity, facts over feelings.

The rise to prominence of the influence of the constructivist worldview has made a significant impact in the career discourse (McIlveen & Schultheiss, 2012). Constructivists argue against the possibility of absolute truth, asserting that an individual’s construction of reality is constructed “from the inside out” through the individual’s own thinking and processing. These constructions are based on individual cognitions in interaction with perspectives formed from person-environment interactions. Constructivism views the person as an open system, constantly interacting with the environment, seeking stability through ongoing change. Mahoney (2003) presented five basic assumptions which can be derived from theories of constructivism: active agency, order, self, social-symbolic relatedness, and lifespan development. Active agency implies that individuals are actively engaged in constructing their lives. Constructivism emphasises the proactive nature of human knowing, acknowledging that individuals actively participate in the construction of their own reality on the basis of its coherence with related systems of personally or socially held beliefs. The second assumption identified by Mahoney (2003) emphasises the ordering processes, that is the patterning of individuals’ experiences to create meaning. The third assumption is that this ordering of personal activity is mainly self-referent, that the focus is on personal identity, with the fourth assumption being that this development of self is embedded in the social and symbolic systems or contexts within which the individual lives. A final core assumption of constructivism is that the activities of the previous assumptions are embedded in an ongoing developmental process that emphasises meaningful action by a developing self working towards a homeostasis. Mahoney and Lyddon (1988) emphasised the change and stability notion as follows: “Embedded with self-change is self-stability – we are all changing all the time and simultaneously remaining the same” (p. 209).

Within this philosophical paradigm, the early thinking about career focused on the individual as operating quite separately from context, a reflection of the industrial era ethos of autonomy and choice. While early theorists began to identify relevant contextual influences (e.g., Super 1957, 1980), it was the development of

social cognitive theory (SCCT, Lent et al., 1994) and developmental contextualism (Vondracek et al., 1986) which introduced the relevance of context to understanding career. More recently a number of theoretical discussions have embedded relationship in discussion of work and life (e.g., psychology of working paradigm, Blustein, 2006, 2011; relational cultural paradigm, Schultheiss, 2013; career construction and life design paradigm, Savickas, 2013a). Proximal relationships such as family, peers and mentors have received some attention in the literature, however Richardson (2012a, b) and Schultheiss (2013) have emphasised that distal social structures and culture inevitably impact proximal relationships. The relational cultural paradigm (Schultheiss) emphasises that relationships cannot be understood outside their social and cultural contexts.

Savickas (2000a) attributed the influence of constructivism to the change in the structure of work and the emphasis on individuals becoming agents in their own lives and careers as it provides an alternate perspective from which to conceptualise careers in post-industrial societies. Constructivism represents an epistemologic stance which emphasises the self-organising and self-management positions of individuals outlined in discussions of career and career development earlier in this chapter. Constructivists assert that individuals actively construct their own reality, and are able to actively construct a meaningful position within the work context. Savickas (2000a) identified the influence of constructivism in the work of personal construct psychologists, and proponents of biographical-hermeneutical and narrative models. More recently, he identified the career construction theory (Savickas, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2013a) as being positioned within the metatheory of social constructionism. Constructivism and its associated worldview will be discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

### *Applying Systems Theory to Career Development*

The roots of thinking about the perspective of the present authors, that is the potential of systems theory to provide an overarching framework for career theories, are in the field of counselling theory. Parallels can be drawn between the theoretical bases of career development and that of counselling and psychotherapy as both are documented by a diverse range of theoretical views. In counselling and psychotherapy, this diversity has been addressed by the concept of eclecticism. Corey (1991, p. 427) commented on reasons for the move toward eclecticism noting that “no single theory is comprehensive enough to account for the complexities of human behavior, especially when the range of client types and their specific problems are taken into consideration”. Corey further claimed that “eclecticism should instead be thought of as a way to harmoniously blend theoretical concepts and methods into a congruent framework” (1991, p. 426). It offers the opportunity to integrate existing perspectives and transcend individual models.

It is instructive to examine the implications of these comments in relation to career theory. First, given the diverse and complex range of influences and theoretical perspectives on career development, it is probable that no single theory

can be comprehensive enough (Super, 1992). Second, it is improbable that one theory can adequately account for the career development of all individuals in all epochs. Third, acceptance of one comprehensive theory raises doubts about the future of the more “narrow” schools” (Corey, 1991, p. 426). Thus the question is raised whether the career development literature needs, or indeed can provide, one comprehensive theory which synthesises and incorporates all others, or whether it needs a “congruent framework” that is able to “harmoniously blend theoretical concepts and methods” (Corey, 1991, p. 426).

Young and Popadiuk (2012) have commented that although there are many approaches, theories and paradigms within the career field, it is important that they are recognised as “important ways to both organize our thinking about career and career intervention, and at the same time, critique that organization” (p. 12). Acknowledging the potential of systems theory to facilitate that organisation is the underlying premise of the work developed in section 2 of this book. Applying this approach to practice is outlined in section 3.

The perspective presented in this book therefore draws on the learning in the field of counselling theory, and systems theory (Plas, 1992; von Bertalanffy, 1968). While systems theory is a well established concept in other fields of literature, for example family therapy, it is a relatively new concept to career development theory. While its potential was acknowledged as early as 1983 (Osipow, 1983), and theorists and researchers have commented on its applicability at various levels (e.g., Collin, 1985; Krumboltz & Nichols, 1990 – see chapter 8 for an expansion of this discussion), its potential as an overarching framework has not been explored. Systems theory is broadly based and is able to take into account the diversity and complexity of the influences on career development, and thus more accurately reflect the complexity of career development. Its elements are present in a number of perspectives being discussed in relation to careers and career development. For example, L. S. Hansen (1997) developed her integrative life planning perspective on principles of interconnectedness, relatedness and wholeness, emphasising that all parts must work together to maintain the whole. In a similar way, Hall (1996) asserted that we need a relational approach to career which features mutuality and interdependence.

Each of these concepts is derived in some part from systems theory. While this theory will be described in considerably more detail in chapter 8, an overview of key principles is presented here. These principles include the following:

- wholeness and interrelationship of parts within a whole;
- the whole is greater than the sum of its parts;
- an acknowledgment of elements which exist within systems theory as well as within particular disciplinary fields (for example, while developmental psychology refers to the importance of a stage approach to career development and sociology raises the importance of socioeconomic status, both are relevant in varying ways to individuals’ systems); and
- mutuality of action and interaction, that is the individual and the context impact on each other in a dynamic and recursive manner.

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The emphasis in systems theory is on the recursiveness, or ongoing relationship, between elements or subsystems of the system and the changes that occur over time as a result of these continual interactions. The application of systems theory to career development allows the disparate concepts addressed in the literature to be drawn together under one theoretical framework. This does not make the existing theories redundant nor are they be devalued, rather each are viewed in the context of all available theory.

Thus the present book is centred around a framework which demonstrates a systems theory perspective on career development. The concept for this framework was first presented as a contextual model for understanding adolescent career decision-making (McMahon, 1992). The concept was further broadened to develop the Systems Theory Framework of career development on the basis of two premises; one, that context is an integral part of systems theory, and two, that decision-making is an integral part of career development (McMahon & Patton, 1995). Broadening the original model to further develop the STF (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) provided the following advantages (discussion of these will be expanded in chapter 9):

- the important contribution of all career theories can be recognised;
- similarities, differences, and interconnections between theories can be demonstrated;
- a systems theory perspective recognises the contribution to career development theory and practice of other fields, for example family therapy;
- systems theory brings to career development a congruence between theory and practice, and new approaches for use in career practice;
- the emphasis is placed on the individual and not on theory. Therefore systems theory can be applicable at a macrolevel of theory analysis, as well as at a microlevel of individual analysis;
- a systems theory perspective enables practitioners to choose from that theory which is most relevant to the needs and situation of each individual, thus drawing on key constructs of all theories; and
- systems theory offers a perspective that underlies the philosophy reflected in the move from positivist approaches to constructivist approaches.

While not preempting a fuller discussion of the STF (discussed in chapter 9), it is necessary here to outline the variables (termed influences) which are included in the framework as they will form the basis of the comparison tables in chapters 2 through 4. These influences have been derived from the career theory literature. Systems theory is used to illustrate their interrelationships with each other in the context of individual career development. Systems theory provides the framework for a macrolevel analysis of theory, and also facilitates a microlevel analysis of an individual's career development.

The STF is composed of several key interrelated systems, including the intrapersonal system of the individual, the social system and the environmental-societal system. The processes between these systems are explained via the recursive nature of interaction within and between these systems, change over time, and chance. The individual system is composed of several intrapersonal content

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influences which include gender, age, self-concept, health, ability, disability, physical attributes, beliefs, personality, interests, values, aptitudes, skills, world of work knowledge, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. Influences representing the content of the social system include peers, family, media, community groups, workplace, and education institutions. Environmental-societal system influences include political decisions, historical trends, globalisation, socioeconomic status, employment market, and geographical location. Process influences include chance, change over time, and recursiveness.

#### CONCLUSION

This book presents a review of the existing theoretical literature, charting its early development through to recent attempts which aim to account for the complexity of career development more comprehensively. Moves toward integration and convergence of the theory literature are examined, and the development of a Systems Theory Framework designed to provide conceptual unity to the field of career development theory is described. We believe that such a framework can forge a new pattern of relationships between existing theories and between theory and practice. Indeed the formation of such relationships has been increasingly evidenced throughout the almost two decades since the first publication of the Systems Theory Framework of career development (e.g., STF and relational theory, Patton, 2007a); STF and dialogical self theory, McIlveen, 2007b; career construction theory and the STF, Patton, 2008; contextual action theory and the STF, Patton, 2014). We will discuss the extensive overall contribution of the STF specifically in chapter 9 and throughout the book.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORIES FOCUSING ON CONTENT

A study of theories focusing on content historically takes us to the origins of career development theory and the work of Frank Parsons at the turn of the twentieth century. In essence, theories of content propose that career choices may be predicted on the basis of individual characteristics (Minor, 1992) especially aptitudes, achievements, interests, values, and personality (Sharf, 2013). This “individual differences” view of career development represents the first of what Savickas (2002, pp. 149-150) describes as two grand perspectives in vocational psychology. The second perspective, the “developmental differences” view, will be elaborated in chapter 3.

Parsons’ (1909) work gave rise to what became known as trait and factor theory, which in turn has given rise to the more dynamic person-environment (PE) fit theories. Despite criticism, discussed later in this chapter, trait and factor models based in the early theorising of Frank Parsons have continued to dominate career practice throughout its history (Lent & S. D. Brown, 2013). A study of theories focusing on content is important from two perspectives. First it introduces many of the key concepts essential to an understanding of career development, and second it provides an historical overview of the evolution of this field of study.

This chapter will trace the historical development of career theory, in particular theories focusing on content. The dominant theoretical approaches of trait and factor theory and the subsequent formulation of person-environment fit theory will be discussed. The work of Parsons (1909) and the five factor model or Big Five (McCrae & John, 1992; Pryor, 1993) will be examined as examples of trait and factor theory, and the work of Holland (1966, 1973, 1985a, 1987, 1992, 1997) and Dawis and Lofquist (1976, 1984) and Dawis (1992, 1994, 1996, 2002, 2005) will be examined as examples of person-environment fit theory. In addition, the work of D. Brown (1996a, 2002b) and Bordin (1990) will be discussed as examples of theories focusing on content. It is noticeable that, since the previous edition of this book, most of these theoretical perspectives have not been advanced. Considerable research has however, been conducted, including much related to Holland’s theory. This limited theoretical advancement of theories of content may reflect the field’s move towards more dynamic and complex accounts of career development. Similarities and differences between the theories of content will be examined.

#### THE WORK OF FRANK PARSONS

Frank Parsons is “... credited with founding the career counselling specialization of modern day professional counselling and the related fields of vocational psychology and counseling psychology” (Pope & Sveinsdottir, 2005, p. 105). With



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an intense commitment to assisting young adolescents transition from school to work, Parsons founded the Vocational Bureau in Boston and is regarded as the founder of modern career guidance because of the lasting influence of his work. His book, *Choosing a Vocation*, published in 1909, is seminal in the field and was “the signal event that incited the vocational guidance movement” (Savickas, 2009a, p. 195) at the time of its publication.

Parsons’ best known contribution to the field of career development is his identification of three key elements of career selection. They are:

1. A clear understanding of yourself, aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, limitations and other qualities.
2. A knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work.
3. True reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts (Parsons, 1909, p. 5).

Each of these three elements represents a major contribution to career theory and practice, both of which “formed a seamless amalgam to Parsons” (Spokane & Glickman, 1994, p. 299), a point which in itself is significant given debate on the links between theory and practice (e.g., Savickas & Walsh, 1996).

In reflecting on Parsons’ approach to the first element, self-knowledge, Zytowski and Swanson observed in 1994 that it was “strikingly consistent with the contemporary practice of career assessment” (p. 305). Twenty years on, this observation holds. His format for career counselling interviews was designed to gather comprehensive information from individuals through a course of questioning by the end of which the counsellor was “able, as a rule, to classify the applicant with a reasonable degree of accuracy” (Parsons, 1909, p. 19). In so doing, Parsons acknowledged that individuals differ in terms of their interests, abilities, values, personality and skills. Parsons suggested this process would take fifteen minutes, a length of time which by today’s counselling standards seems remarkably short. He also developed the first self-assessment form where clients completed a comprehensive questionnaire comprising over 100 questions prior to their career counselling interview. His assessment and interview process “established the format for career counselling” (Holland, 1987, p. 29). Thus, while Parsons introduced the concept of career assessment, it was not until the development of the psychometrics movement (discussed later in this chapter) that the instruments needed to efficiently enhance self-knowledge and provide links to the world of work were provided. In this regard, Parsons began a brief association with Hugo Münsterberg, the most famous psychologist of the time, and the “founding father of applied psychology” (Porfeli, 2009, p. 227) in order to develop a scientific base for vocational guidance (Savickas, 2009a). While Münsterberg admired Parsons’ work, he believed that Parsons’ vocational guidance method could benefit from a more scientific approach especially in relation to assessment (Porfeli). Indeed, Münsterberg proposed the first theory of vocation, which although not widely adopted or accepted was the only such theory until Holland proposed his theory in 1959 (Porfeli).

Parsons' second element relates to knowledge about the world of work, a concept he viewed as vital to comprehensive career planning and development, and that has always been viewed as critical in career development work (DeBell, 2001). Parallels can be drawn between the information sources advocated for use by Parsons with those used by modern day career counsellors, including lists and classifications of industries, information on training and courses, and general industry information. For example, Holland's (1997) occupational classification, the O-Net career information system in the United States, and Australia's national career information system (myfuture.edu.au) are present day examples of the importance of world of work knowledge. Thus the development of career information delivery systems so essential to modern career guidance also has its origins in the work of Parsons.

Parsons' concept of 'true reasoning' remains to the present day his "most enduring contribution" (Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 5) to the field. While 'true reasoning' was never fully explained by Parsons, it seems that he saw cognitive processes and analytical skills as fundamental to career selection. This reflects the visionary nature of his work and again emphasises its relevance to modern career guidance.

It is these three concepts which are much cited and for which Parsons (1909) is best remembered. Less attention however, has been given to some aspects of his "personal record and self-analysis" (p. 27) questionnaire. As well as gathering information on abilities and interests, it also invites individuals to reflect on contextual influences such as family, health, resources, including their financial situation, relatives and friends, lifestyle, and mobility. While Parsons did not explain how this information was used, he did at least include it in the assessment process, a point that seems to have been overlooked in the development of the trait and factor theories. In this regard, since Zytowski and Swanson's (1994) claim that vocational psychology has always struggled with the issue of self-assessment and how much confidence to place in it despite evidence that attests to its validity, the field has moved more towards approaches that actively encourage self-assessment. Specifically, the field's moves towards narrative approaches to career counselling grounded in constructivist and social constructionist theory value the personal agency of clients and thus their capacity to actively engage in telling stories about and reflecting on their careers in order to identify the themes and patterns located within them.

While Parsons' work is most commonly associated with the logical positivist worldview, his emphasis on intrapersonal and interpersonal concerns in career decision-making processes (O'Brien, 2001) and his acknowledgement of a broader context and the active role of the client in their own career decision-making processes do not sit well with this worldview. Rather, they sit more comfortably with the constructivist worldview that was previously described in chapter 1. Indeed Spokane and Glickman (1994) have suggested that "Parsons presaged the constructivist position" (p. 298). In addition, Parsons was "an advocate for youth, women, the poor, and the disadvantaged" (O'Brien, 2001, p. 66) and as such pioneered the notions of individualised approaches to career counselling and

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advancing social justice through career development work (O'Brien). Thus it seems that Parsons' work is multistoried (McMahon & Patton, 2006b) and has contributed to both the logical positivist and constructivist positions on career development work.

Parsons believed that counsellors were best positioned to achieve "person-vocation matching" whereas his colleague Münsterberg believed that "at least the assessment of the client was best left to methods developed by psychologists or those trained and closely supervised by them" (Porfeli, 2009, p. 228). In essence, Münsterberg saw his "scientific vocational guidance" as being supported by "the vocational guidance movement of Parsons, and the scientific management movement" (Porfeli, 2009, p. 230), the forerunner of industrial and organisational psychology. The tension between science and practice perceived in Münsterberg's views polarised the vocational movement at the time which resulted in his theory not receiving support and may have perpetuated a division in the field that has remained to the present day (Porfeli, 2009) despite calls for greater unity (e.g., Collin & Patton, 2009a; Sampson, 2009; [see chapter 14]) and practice examples being offered (e.g., McMahon & M. Watson, 2012a, b). Porfeli draws attention to the three elements of Münsterberg's theory, specifically thinking, feeling and doing which, to some extent, echo recent calls for the field to take greater account of the subjective career.

Despite Parsons' dual contribution to career development theory, the dominant story for which he is best known is that related to the logical positivist worldview. In particular, Parsons' (1909) work represents the "first conceptual framework for career decision-making and became the first guide for career counsellors" (D. Brown & Brooks, 1996b, p. 1). It was Parsons' hope that individuals who actively engaged in the process of choosing their vocation would be more satisfied and more efficient with their work resulting in a decrease in employers' costs (D. Brown, 2002a). To this end he emphasised maximising the fit between individuals and occupations. This concept is as relevant today as it was in Parsons' time. As testament to the longevity and influence of the work of Parsons, Spokane and Glickman (1994) noted more than two decades ago that the counsellor directed approach to career counselling outlined by Parsons had dominated the field for more than 70 years as had the individual differences approach to assessment. This situation has perpetuated until the present time with Lent and S. D. Brown (2013) concluding that "Parsons' simple formula still serves as a fundamental blueprint for the practice of career choice counselling" (p. 21). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the growing emphasis on narrative approaches, client agency and meaning making may see the lesser told story of Parson's work gain more recognition.

### DIFFERENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY

While Parsons understood the importance of self-knowledge to career selection, he had to rely to a large extent on self-study by clients due to a lack of appropriate assessment instruments. However during the early part of the 1900s there was also growth in the differential psychology movement with its emphases on individual

differences and the use of psychometric assessment which provided counselling psychology with a technology for client assessment based on psychological tests (Dawis, 1992). The movement toward individual differences “shifted the emphasis in vocational guidance to the assessment of individual’s abilities, interests, and personality traits in relation to occupational requirements and occupational adjustment” (Dawis, 1992, p. 10), a process that gained considerable momentum with the advent of each of the world wars. Now, as then, assessment is used in career counselling “to help clients gather and interpret information relevant to career decision-making” (Forrest & Brooks, 1993, p. 233). Assessment is used as a stimulus for both career exploration and self-exploration (de Bruin & de Bruin, 2006) and it assists individuals with decision making (Sampson, 2009). Despite the pervasive influence of the differential psychology movement in the field of career psychology, several authors have cautioned about the uncritical use of career assessment (e.g., Sampson, 2009) and others have emphasised the need to use it to facilitate self-exploration (e.g., Blustein & Flum, 1999; Hartung & Borges, 2005).

#### *Trait and Factor Theory*

The technology provided by the psychology of individual differences such as inventories and psychological tests paved the way for the development of what is the oldest, most widely used, and most durable of the career development theories (Zunker, 2011), the trait and factor approach. Zunker explains that the key assumption of trait and factor theory is that individuals have unique traits that can be objectively measured and matched against the requirements of occupations. Essentially, Parsons’ (1909) process of studying individuals, considering occupations and matching them provided the foundation for trait and factor theory. Emanating out of the logical positivist worldview, trait and factor theory relies on measurement and objective data that is interpreted by an expert who, on that basis, also makes predictions about an individual’s suitability for future jobs.

Two main thrusts developed out of the emergence of the psychometric movement in the early 1900s, specifically the measurement of individual differences and the identification of the traits needed by individuals for successful job performance. The development of tests of abilities and aptitudes and inventories of interests which were increasingly used in the counselling process complemented and broadened the work of Parsons in particular and vocational guidance generally (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992). Indeed the use of assessment continues to be a point of difference between counselling and career counselling.

According to trait and factor theory, choosing an occupation involves trying to match an individual to a job so that their needs will be met and their job performance will be satisfactory (Zunker, 2011). The terms trait and factor “refer to the assessment of characteristics of the person and the job” (Sharf, 2013, p. 25). Traits are individual characteristics which can be measured through testing, and factors are characteristics required for successful job performance. Traits were originally viewed as being biologically based and therefore unchanging, and later as learned and subject to change. The term ‘trait and factor’ implies a matching

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between individuals and jobs, and career selection occurs as a result of understanding the relationship between knowledge about self and knowledge about occupations (Sharf, 2013; Zunker, 2011). This process clearly reflects Parsons' (1909) concept of vocational guidance and in doing so establishes his place as the founder of what is now known as trait and factor theory.

Over two decades ago, D. Brown (1987) noted that the traits of greatest interest to career counsellors such as interests and aptitudes are viewed as relatively stable. In addition, he described five characteristics of trait and factor theory which reflect its origins in differential psychology. The first is that traits are not independent of each other and that there is interaction between them which leads to behaviour patterns. However the links remain unclear. In line with differential psychology, the second characteristic identified by D. Brown is the value placed on the quantification of data to trait and factor theorists and the objective use of inventories, tests and other measures. Related to this is the third characteristic, external validation, where individuals are compared with reference groups in particular work environments. The fourth characteristic relates to the interactive nature of trait and factor theory and the influence of the environment on the personalities of individuals, and in turn their influence on the environment as they attempt to satisfy their needs. This has been emphasised more with the evolution from trait and factor approach to the person-environment fit approach. The fifth and final characteristic discussed by D. Brown is that the "average or typical individual has the innate ability to make adequate decisions if both personal and environmental data are available to him or her" (p. 14), the process described by Parsons as true reasoning.

Trait and factor thinking portrays career decision-making as a cognitive process in which decisions are made on the basis of objective data. There is little, if any, consideration given to subjective processes or contextual influences. The process presumes that choice is available for everyone. In addition, career choice is viewed as a single, static, point in time event where there is a single right answer.

Theorists and practitioners of trait and factor theory have developed and used a number of assessment instruments to objectively identify the profile of traits possessed by an individual. In particular, interests, aptitudes, values, personality and achievement can be measured by inventories and psychological tests. Occupations can also be considered by the 'amounts' of individual traits they require. When the profile of a person is matched with the profile of an occupation, the degree of fit between the person and the occupation can be seen. Trait and factor theory also "influenced the study of job descriptions and job requirements in an attempt to predict future job success from the measurement of traits that are job related" (Zunker, 1994, p. 26). In fact, major contributions of trait and factor theory to career counselling have been the development of many assessment instruments and techniques and also occupational information that includes occupational descriptions, classifications of occupations and the trait and factor requirements of each occupation (Sharf, 2013). Indeed, many countries have invested considerably in developing occupational information systems to assist the career decision making of their citizens.

Until the 1950s, trait and factor theory was the preeminent approach in vocational psychology. However its shortcomings were gradually realised (Super, 1992). At the same time, challenges to it emerged “as Rogerian psychotherapy permeated the counselling field, and developmental (Super, 1957) and social learning approaches (Krumboltz, A. M. Mitchell, & Jones, 1976) to career counselling matured” (Chartrand, 1991, p. 519). Thus as different conceptualisations of career development and the counselling process emerged, awareness of the limitations of the trait and factor approach was also heightened. In recent times, this awareness culminated in an unhelpful division in the field between proponents of approaches that are more consistent with the logical positivist philosophy and its trait and factor approaches and proponents of more recent constructivist theories and approaches. This division has been described by Sampson (2009) as an “unnecessary divorce” (p. 91) and he called for the field to recognise and value the contributions of both theoretical positions. Despite a broader range of career theories and approaches to career counselling, the trait and factor approach has remained a dominant force in the field with Zunker (2011) concluding that it has an “important role in future career development theory and career counseling” (p. 27).

#### *Limitations and Criticisms of Trait and Factor Theory*

It is useful to examine some of the limitations and criticisms of the trait and factor approach, as it paves the way for discussing the evolution of the person-environment model. Criticism has generally been directed to the approach as a theory of career development and to the counselling process derived from it. Both will be discussed here.

The assumptions previously discussed invite criticism. At a fundamental level, trait and factor theory may be viewed as “superficial” because of the limited attention it pays to contextual factors such as social influences and processes such as work adjustment (Sharf, 2013, p. 433) and that it is static rather than developmental (Zunker, 2011). Further, it has been questioned whether people actually use reasoning in all career choices and whether in fact all people actually have a reasoned choice in relation to career (Blustein, 2006; Roberts, 1977, an issue discussed further in chapter 6) with Roberts (2012) raising concerns about the effects of social class on employment opportunities. More recently, emotion and subjectivity which are not features of trait and factor theories have received more attention in relation to career decision-making (e.g., Kidd, 2004, 2008, 2011; Patton & McMahon, 2006a). It has also been questioned whether occupational choice is a single event, whether single types of people are found in each type of job or whether there is a single right goal for each career decision maker (Zunker, 2011). Zunker also is critical of the failure to account for growth and change in traits such as interests, values, aptitudes, achievements, and personalities. These criticisms have become even more relevant in the world of work of the twenty-first century where it is predicted that individuals will engage in career decisions about learning and work several times in their lifetime and that they will change jobs

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several times during their working lives (P. S. Jarvis, 2003; Savickas et al., 2009). Isaacson and D. Brown (1993) claimed that trait and factor theory does not account for the way in which there are a broad range of individual differences in every occupational group.

Criticisms have been levelled at counselling practices based solely on this model for over three decades. For example, Crites (1981) described the trait and factor approach as a “test and tell” approach that occurs as “three interviews and a cloud of dust” (p. 49). Sharf (2013) describes the three step process as “deceptively simple” (p. 41). Concerns have been expressed about its dependence and over-reliance on assessment results (Zunker, 2011) which seems to result in an authoritative position for the counsellor that occurs at the expense of the counselling relationship. Indeed, Sharf (2013) regards trait and factor theory as the “simplest and least sophisticated career development theory that provides few guidelines for counsellors” (p. 433). These criticisms have come more sharply into focus as constructivist approaches to career counselling have become more influential (see chapter 13 for a more extensive discussion of this topic). Despite such criticism, “trait-and-factor theory, as it is understood today, continues to undergird counselling for career development” (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992, p. 32). McDaniels and Gysbers’ comment is as applicable today as it was over two decades ago despite challenges to career counselling to revise its practice in order to remain relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (see McMahon & Patton, 2006a). It seems that the simplicity and easy guidelines of the approach are appealing to practitioners (Sharf, 2013), if not to theorists (an issue discussed in part three of this book).

D. Brown (1996b) claimed that “In its current state, trait and factor theory cannot stand alone as an explanatory system for occupational choice making and has even less validity as an explanatory system for the career development process” (p. 347). By way of explanation, Sharf (2013) noted that there is little research to support or refute trait and factor theory as a viable theory of career development. Rather, Sharf notes that the “extensive and vast research that has been done has related traits and factors to one another or has established the validity and reliability of measurements of traits and factors” (p. 26). Thus it would be fair to say that trait and factor theory is not a theory of career development, but rather a collection of theories based on influences which contribute to career development. Typical of these theories are the five factor model (McCrae & John, 1992; Pryor, 1993) which will be discussed here, and the early work of Holland (1966, 1973, 1985a, 1987). However Holland’s original work has been refined to the point where his later work (Holland, 1997) is more reflective of the person-environment fit theory. Therefore it will be discussed as an example of that theory later in this chapter.

### *Five Factor Model of Personality*

Since the growth of the differential psychology movement and its emphasis on assessment, personality has been one of the traits which has attracted most focus,

and the development of the five factor model corresponds with this. For over a decade, little has been written in the field of career development about the five factor model which is based on five overarching factors on which trait theorists agreed and termed “the Big 5” (Walsh & Chartrand, 1994, p. 193). The Big 5 is a hierarchical organisation of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (McCrae & John, 1992). Emanating from the field of personality, the five factor model has been of great use in “integrating and systematizing diverse conceptions and measures” (McCrae & Costa, 2008, p. 159).

The five traits are best explained through the use of adjectival descriptors such as those used by Wayne, Musisco and Fleeson (2004) which reflect a consensus of opinion of authors before them, specifically:

1. *Conscientiousness*: achievement oriented, organised, thoughtful, planful, responsible, hardworking, thorough;
2. *Neuroticism*: anxious, insecure, defensive, tense, worried;
3. *Extraversion*: active, assertive, energetic, enthusiastic, outgoing, talkative;
4. *Agreeableness*: cooperative, likeable, forgiving, kind, sympathetic, trusting; and
5. *Openness to experience*: intelligent, unconventional, imaginative, curious, creative, original.

As illustrated in these descriptors, individual differences may find their expression in language (De Raad, 1998).

Significantly, while these five terms are widely used, consensus has not been reached about either the names (De Raad, 1998; McCrae & John, 1992; Pryor, 1993) or the number of factors (De Raad; Pryor), a topic which is discussed at length by McCrae and John. For example, in 1993 Pryor suggested that researchers were moving away from neuroticism towards ‘emotionality’ or ‘emotional stability’. De Raad (1998) referred to “Emotional stability (or neuroticism)” (p. 113), whereas Wayne, Musisca and Fleeson (2004) used the term neuroticism. In addition, De Raad used the term “autonomy (or Culture, Intellect, Openness to Experience)” (p. 113). Each dimension represents groups of traits, and five factor theorists claim that these can be found in almost all personality instruments. However McCrae and John (1992, pp. 194-195) raised the question: “Precisely which traits define each factor, and which are central and which are peripheral?”

Because of the comprehensiveness of the model, there is no overarching theory, but rather a number of complementary theories, each accounting for various sections of the model. The debate in five factor theory about the titles of the factors mentioned previously stems out of two predominant traditions in five factor theory – the ‘lexical tradition’ and the ‘questionnaire tradition’ (McCrae & John, 1992). The ‘lexical tradition’ holds that throughout the development of a language all traits will have been observed by the speakers of that language and encoded. Thus, by decoding the language, researchers can “discover the basic dimensions of personality” (p. 184). However, questionnaires have been used as the basis for most personality research. While there has been “considerable redundancy in what



they measure” (McCrae & John, 1992, p. 185), the major contribution of the questionnaire tradition is in fact a body of theory.

McCrae and John (1992) claimed that the five factor model has appeal on three levels. First, it integrates a wide variety of personality constructs and provides an umbrella under which researchers of different orientations can communicate. Second, it is comprehensive and its measurement of all five factors mitigates against relevant personality traits being neglected in studies and in career counselling practice. Third, it is efficient in providing “at least a global description of personality with as few as five scores” (p. 206). In addition, the model has cross-cultural replication. For example it has been studied with German, Japanese, Chinese and Dutch samples, which in light of criticism based on the cross-cultural application of career theory, is a considerable point in its favour. However, the cross cultural application of the big five factors has been questioned with De Raad (1998) suggesting that three or four of the factors can be identified in different languages and that the fifth factor “remains troublesome” (p. 122). In this regard De Raad raises the question about whether it is time to disregard the fifth factor and direct energy “toward articulating a universal Big Four” (p. 122) but concludes that there are reasons to retain the hypothesis of the big five.

Pryor (1993) observed that the five factor model was becoming as influential to personality measurement as Holland’s hexagon has been to vocational interest measurement. In keeping with the psychology of individual differences, Digman (1990) noted that “at a minimum, research on the five factor model has given us a useful set of broad dimensions that characterize individual differences” and that they “provide a good answer to the question of personality structure” (p. 436). More recently, McCrae and Costa (2008) have described five factor theory as a “contemporary version of trait theory” (p. 176) and as a grand theory that attempts to provide “an overview of the functioning of the whole person across the lifespan” (p. 176). Indeed unlike trait theory, five factor theory depicts a dynamic personality operating system that takes account of self-concept, cultural adaptations, external influences and objective biographical (emotional reactions) (McCrae & Costa, 1996).

Despite shortcomings which include limited consensus on the nature of the factors, and limited prediction and explanation capabilities, Pryor (1993) maintained that the five factor model of personality has much to offer the understanding of the construct of personality in career development theory. For example, it has relevance for organisational, industrial and educational psychologists, and in any field that uses personality assessment because it provides useable instruments (McCrae & John, 1992). Possibly due to its origins in personality psychology, the five factor model has still not had wide application in the field of career theory despite Pryor’s predictions. However, the influence of the five factor model continues to permeate career development through its application in research (e.g., Gardner, Reithel, Cogliser, Walumbwa, & Foley, 2012; Wille, Beyers, & De Fruyt, 2012).

The five factor model typifies the trait and factor models. It is static in nature, relies on the measurement of individual differences, and does not describe the

process of development. However, in a similar way to Parsons (1909), McCrae and John (1992) acknowledged the “richness of human individuality” (p. 207) and life contexts and history. Unlike Parsons, they did not explain how they would gather this data. Thus while there is acknowledgment in trait and factor theory of contextual variables, in their application they rely heavily on the measurement of individual traits and matching processes.

#### *Person-Environment Fit*

Clearly evidenced in the five factor model is the static nature of the trait and factor theories and their lack of emphasis on development. As the notion of development was embraced by career theorists, proponents of trait and factor theory could no longer ignore criticism of its static approach. Consequently, over time there has been an evolution from this static approach of trait and factor theory where a person is matched with an occupation to the more dynamic approach of person-environment fit (P-E fit). P-E fit could be regarded as an “optimal outcome” (Rottinghaus & Van Esbroeck, 2011, p. 36) of career guidance interventions.

Savickas (2007) explained that there are actually two models of person-environment fit, complementary and supplementary. Complementary fit applies when a worker and an organisation offer what each other needs. For example, an organisation requires a set of skills that is provided by a worker who needs a salary. The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Dawis, 2005) described later in this chapter best represents a complementary fit model. Supplementary fit applies when a worker and an organisation have similar characteristics. For example, a teacher works in the social environment of a school. Supplementary fit is illustrated by Holland’s (1997) theory described later in this chapter.

The term “fit” has been used interchangeably with those of “congruence” and “correspondence” (Tinsley, 2000), each of which will be explained later in this chapter in the work of Holland and Dawis respectively. In essence, the construct of “fit between a worker and a job has provided a framework for comprehending vocational behavior” (Savickas, 2000b, p. 145) since the beginning of the twentieth century. Chartrand (1991) identified three assumptions that have transferred to the person-environment approach from trait and factor theory. They are:

1. “people are viewed as capable of making rational decisions ...;
2. people and work environments differ in reliable, meaningful, and consistent ways ...; and
3. the greater the congruence between personal characteristics and job requirements, the greater the likelihood of success” (p. 520).

Although the assumption of congruence between personal characteristics and job requirements as a predictor of job satisfaction is central to both approaches, the concept of dynamic reciprocity is a feature of the person-environment fit approach (Rounds & Tracey, 1990). This concept indicates an ongoing process of adjustment as environments are influenced by individuals and individuals are influenced by environments. “The P x E fit perspective explicitly assumes that people and

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environments change continually in ongoing adjustment” (Chartrand, 1991, p. 521), and that individuals seek out congruent environments, thus reflecting a shift from the trait and factor approach. Savickas (2007) explains that the interrelated but independent constructs of complementary and supplementary fit relate to the way in which individuals adapt to and stabilise in work environments. The notion of adaptation to an environment addresses some of the criticism that has been levelled at trait and factor theory. These include Crites’ (1969) criticism that trait and factor theory focuses only on content and does not account for the process of career development, and D. Brown’s (1990) criticism that trait and factor theory does not have “validity as an explanatory system for the career development process” (p. 347).

Chartrand (1991) suggested that there are two questions which guide the person-environment fit approach. They are:

1. “what kinds of personal and environmental factors are salient in predicting vocational choice and adjustment, and
2. how is the process of person and environment interaction best characterized” (p. 520).

The first question is typical of the purely descriptive, static matching model of trait and factor theory, whereas the second reflects the move to a more dynamic, process oriented person-environment fit approach and is illustrative of the acceptance of career development as a lifelong developmental process (discussed further in chapter 3). Person-environment fit theory has come under close scrutiny with Tinsley (2000) in a major review concluding that the “P-E fit model provides a valid and useful way of thinking about the interaction between the individual and the environment” (p. 173).

More recently, Rottinghaus and Van Esbroeck (2011) concluded that the P-E fit will likely “remain omnipresent” (p. 47) because it is so integral to career theory and practice. This is reflected in its application to a Retirement Transition and Adjustment framework proposed by Hesketh, Griffin and Loh (2011) to account for individuals transitioning to retirement. Of interest for 21<sup>st</sup> century career development practitioners is the notion that ‘best fit’ may not always be possible for clients who may need to consider a ‘good enough fit’ or ‘acceptable fit’ depending on their circumstances (Rottinghaus & Van Esbroeck). As circumstances and individual’s perceptions of their environments change, so too may their perceptions of ‘good enough fit’. Two theories will be presented to illustrate the person-environment fit approach, Holland’s theory of vocational choice and Dawis and Lofquist’s theory of work adjustment, both of which Leung (2008) identified as two of five theories that have “guided career guidance and counselling practice and research in the past few decades in the USA as well as internationally” (p. 115). Similarly, Rottinghaus and Van Esbroeck (2011) regard the work of Parsons (1909), Holland (1959), and Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1964) as “pillars of vocational scholarship that have inspired leading scholars from diverse perspectives to debate the utility of P-E fit throughout the years” (p. 35).

*Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments*

First proposed in 1959, Holland's theory was conceptualised as a trait and factor theory and "remains in the tradition of differential psychology" (Weinrach & Srebalus, 1990, p. 47). For almost four decades Holland (1959, 1966, 1973, 1985a, 1992, 1997) revised and refined his theory. In 2010, the "50th anniversary of the introduction of John L. Holland's (1959) theory of vocational personalities and work environments" to the field (Nauta, 2013, p. 11) was celebrated by an article in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. In reflecting on Holland's contribution to the field, Savickas (2007) concluded that "Holland's RIASEC vocabulary and typology provide an invaluable resource for articulating accounts of work and workers" (p. 84).

Originally proposed as a theory of vocational choice (e.g., Holland, 1959, 1973, 1992), Holland's (1997) theory was titled "a theory of vocational personalities and work environments" to reflect its theoretical refinements. In a 2013 chapter on Holland's theory, Nauta used the title "Holland's theory of vocational choice and adjustment" (p. 55) despite the fact that Holland has not significantly addressed adjustment as a process of career development. Weinrach and Srebalus (1990) noted the significance of Holland's work and claimed that it was the "most popular career theory of the last decade" (p. 47), a situation that remains unchanged. In a 1999 tribute to the work of Holland, a special issue of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* was published with G. D. Gottfredson claiming that Holland's theory "revolutionized the delivery of vocational assistance worldwide" (p. 15). It remains one of the most influential theories in career guidance and counselling (Nauta, 2013). Significantly, Holland's work has influenced the development of interest inventories, career assessment, the classification of occupational information, and career counselling.

Holland set out to write a theory that was simple and practical, and its success can be attributed to the achievement of these goals, its user friendliness and its testability (Nauta, 2010). The basic concept of the theory is uncomplicated, and many assessment instruments derived from it have been produced to assist practitioners. In essence, Holland's theory provides a parallel way of describing people and environments by classifying them according to six types (L. S. Gottfredson & Richards, 1999). Interrelationships between the types provides a means of predicting the career choices of individuals, how easy it will be for them to choose, how satisfied they will be with their career, and how well they will perform (Nauta, 2013).

Holland's (1959, 1966, 1973, 1985a, 1992, 1997) typological theory illustrates a person-environment perspective and he remains a major proponent of the person-environment fit approach, despite being classified as a trait and factor theory in major texts (e.g., D. Brown & Associates, 2002; Betz, 2008). The person-environment fit perspective is reflected in three questions explained in Holland (1992). They are:

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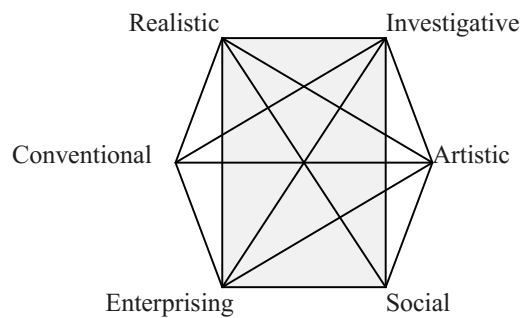
1. What personal and environmental characteristics lead to satisfying career decisions, involvement, and achievement, and what characteristics lead to indecision, dissatisfying decisions, or lack of accomplishment?
2. What personal and environmental characteristics lead to stability or change in the kind of level and work a person performs over a lifetime?
3. What are the most effective methods for providing assistance for people with career problems? (p. 1).

Underlying Holland's theory is the assumption that vocational interests are one aspect of personality, and therefore a "description of an individual's vocational interests is also a description of the individual's personality" (Weinrach & Srebalus, 1990, p. 39). Weinrach and Srebalus (1990) described Holland's theory as 'structural-interactive' because of the links it provides between personality and job types. Holland (1992) described his typology as the structure for organising information about jobs and people, whereas his assumptions about people and environments acting on each other are the interactive component of his theory. In this regard, he claimed that "jobs change people, and people change jobs" (Holland, 1992, p. 11). His model may be summed up in the following propositions:

1. In our culture, most persons can be categorized as one of six types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional.
2. There are six model environments: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional.
3. People search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles.
4. Behavior is determined by an interaction between personality and environment (Holland, 1997, p. 4)

Holland's theory describes the career decision maker using six personality/interest types. He claimed that by late adolescence most people can be characterised according to their resemblance to these types (Nauta, 2013). These six types are "theoretical organizers for understanding how individuals differ in their personality, interests and behaviours" (Spokane, 1996, p. 40), or "models against which we can measure the real person" (Holland, 1992, p. 2). Although explaining how these types develop in individuals was not a focus of Holland's work (Nauta, 2013), he did explain that individuals develop preferences for certain activities as a result of their interaction with "cultural and personal forces including peers, biological heredity, parents, social class, culture, and the physical environment" (1992, p. 2), and that these preferences become interests in which individuals develop competencies. As a result of his/her interests and competencies, an individual develops a "personal disposition that leads him or her to think, perceive, and act in special ways" (Holland, 1992, p. 2). Personality types are therefore indicated by choice of school subjects, hobbies, leisure activities and work, and vocational interests and choices are reflected by personality. In choosing or avoiding certain environments or activities, types are seen to be active rather than passive (1992).

As mentioned previously, Holland's (1985a, 1992, 1997) typology categorises people into one of six broad types of personality, specifically Realistic ( R ), Investigative ( I ), Artistic ( A ), Social ( S ), Enterprising ( E ), Conventional ( C ). As a result, Holland's type theory is commonly referred to as the RIASEC model (Holland, 1985a) and is represented diagrammatically using a hexagon which provides a visual representation of the relationships between the personality or occupational types (see Figure 2.1). Research has generally provided support for the ordering of Holland's types. However there is less support for the hexagonal representation (Nauta, 2013) with some researchers (e.g., Armstrong & Rounds, 2008; Darcy & Tracey, 2007; Tracey & Rounds, 1993) lending support for a circular or circumplex structure (Nauta, 2013; Tracey & Gupta, 2008). Indeed, Tracey and Gupta (2008) claim that the hexagon is "often interchangeably referred to as a circular structure" (p. 528) because a circle can be "super-imposed onto the equilateral hexagon" (p. 529).



*Figure 2.1 Hexagonal model for defining the relations among Holland's personality types and environments and their interactions (Reproduced by special permission of the publisher, Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. 16204 North Florida Ave, Lutz, FL33549, from Making Vocational Choices, 3rd Ed, Copyright, 1973, 1985, 1992, 1997 by PAR, Inc. All rights reserved).*

Holland proposed that these personality types are related to needs and that an individual's type is indicative of their major needs. In addition, the nature of the work environments can be classified in a similar way. Holland claimed that individuals seek out work environments which are compatible with their attitudes and values and allow them to use their skills and abilities, a corollary of which is that people in similar jobs will have similar personalities. Behaviour is determined by interaction between the individual and the environment and determines factors such as job satisfaction, stability and achievement, educational choice, and personal competence and susceptibility to influence. These outcomes can all be predicted from a knowledge of personality types and environmental models (Holland, 1992, 1997). While matching is still central to Holland's approach, it is his attention to interaction, a feature of later refinements of his theory, that locates

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him under the umbrella of the person-environment fit theories rather than the trait and factor theories.

In relation to interaction, Holland suggested that children's biological dispositions in interaction with their early life experiences produce learned preferences for some activities and not others. These preferences in combination with learned skills and competencies shape values, beliefs and styles (G. D. Gottfredson, 1999). Holland proposed that personality traits stabilise with age. While this could be seen as a static view of personality, G. D. Gottfredson claimed that it implies an interactional process between people and environments where they "make choices, display competencies, seek pleasure and avoid punishing experiences are due in part to underlying dispositions" (p. 30). In other words, "The individual is viewed as a relatively stable entity who moves in and out of environments when the perceived fit is no longer optimal" (Spokane, Luchetta, & Richwine, 2002, p. 379).

Holland (1997) advanced four propositions relating to interaction between people and work environments which have received less attention in the literature (Spokane et al., 2002). These propositions reflect the interactive nature of Holland's theory and illustrate why it is aptly termed a person-environment fit theory.

1. People find environments reinforcing and satisfying when environmental patterns resemble their personality patterns. This situation makes for stability of behavior because persons receive a good deal of selective reinforcement of their behavior.
2. Incongruent interactions stimulate change in human behavior; conversely, congruent interactions encourage stability of behavior. Persons tend to change or become like the dominant persons in the environment. This tendency is greater, the greater the degree of congruence is between the person and the environment. Those persons who are most incongruous will be changed least.
3. A person resolves incongruence by seeking a new and congruent environment or by changing personal behavior and perceptions.
4. The reciprocal interactions of person and successive jobs usually lead to a series of success and satisfaction cycles [pp. 53-54] (Spokane et al., 2002, p. 388).

In keeping with its origins in differential psychology, many assessment instruments have been developed in conjunction with Holland's theory. One such instrument is the Self-Directed Search (SDS), developed to measure Holland's six personality types. Holland did not assume that individuals would resemble only one type, but that they would resemble a dominant type and also have some resemblance to one or more other types (Nauta, 2013). Thus, individuals who complete the SDS receive a score on each of the six types, and typically an individual's profile would contain characteristics of each of the six types. However subtypes are ascribed using a three letter code representing the three most prevalent types in a profile. The types can best be described using both descriptors and examples of occupations which would match each type as illustrated in [Table 2.1](#).

*Table 2.1 Types, descriptors, and occupations according to Holland's typology*

<i>Type</i>	<i>Descriptors</i>	<i>Occupations</i>
Realistic	has practical abilities and would prefer to work with machines or tools rather than people	mechanic; farmer; builder; surveyor; pilot
Investigative	analytical and precise; good with detail; prefers to work with ideas; enjoys problem solving and research	chemist; geologist; biologist; researcher
Artistic	artistic or creative ability; uses intuition and imagination for problem solving	musician; artist; interior decorator; writer; industrial designer
Social	good social skills; friendly and enjoys involvement with people and working in teams	nurse; teacher; social worker; psychologist; counsellor
Enterprising	leadership, speaking and negotiating abilities; likes leading others towards the achievement of a goal	salesperson; television producer; manager; administrative assistant; lawyer
Conventional	systematic and practical worker; good at following plans and attending to detail	banker; secretary; accountant

Several “secondary assumptions” (Holland, 1992, p. 4) are fundamental to the work of Holland and are related to his use of the hexagon as a diagnostic system termed calculus (Spokane & Cruza-Guet, 2005; Spokane et al., 2002). In essence, this diagnostic system, or calculus, may be used to describe the relationships within and between the types and environments ordered according to the hexagonal model. Central to calculus are four diagnostic indicators, consistency, differentiation, identity and congruence.

Consistency means that some types have more in common than others, and is best illustrated using the first two letters of the three letter code. Diagrammatically types which are adjacent on the hexagon (for example SA) have more in common than types which are opposite (for example SR). Therefore individuals demonstrate high consistency when the first two letters of their three letter code adjoin on the hexagon, for example a realistic investigative (RI) profile, medium consistency when the first two letters of their code is separated by a letter on the hexagon, for example a realistic artistic (RA) profile, or low consistency when two letters on the hexagon separate the first two letters of their code, for example a realistic social



(RS) profile. Individuals with consistent types may find career decision making easier (Nauta, 2013). By contrast, types which are seen as being inconsistent, that is non-adjacent or opposite on the hexagon, may have difficulty finding employment that accommodates all aspects of their personality.

Differentiation relates to individual profiles. An individual who has a clearly defined type is regarded as well differentiated whereas an individual who fits several types is regarded as undifferentiated, which when taken to extreme would be represented by a “flat profile with identical scores on all six types” (Spokane, 1996, p. 45). Differentiation refers to how well crystallised an individual’s interests are. Holland posited that individuals who have more highly differentiated profiles will find career decision making more easy (Nauta, 2013).

Identity represents an addition to Holland’s (1992) theory, and refers to the degree of clarity and stability an individual has about their goals, interests and talents. An individual who has many goals would be referred to as having low identity. Identity is related to differentiation and consistency in defining the strength of personalities and environments (Spokane & Cruza-Guet, 2005; Spokane et al., 2002).

Congruence, described by Nauta (2013) as the most important part of Holland’s theory, refers to the degree of fit between the individual’s personality and work environment. This would be represented by a similar three letter code for the personality and the work environment, for example an artistic type working in an artistic environment. Thus, the more similar a person is to their working environment the higher the degree of congruence (Nauta, 2013). In practice, Holland posited that individuals aspire to environments that are congruent with their personalities and if this is achieved, they will be more satisfied and successful, and therefore stay in those careers longer (Nauta, 2010, 2013). There has been ongoing debate about Holland’s concept of congruence (e.g., Arnold, 2004; Chartrand & Walsh, 1999; Hesketh, 2000; Tinsley, 2000). For example, in a major review on the construct of congruence in a special issue of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Tinsley (2000) found support in general for person-environment fit models as a useful way of thinking about the interaction between individuals and their environments but raised questions about elements of Holland’s theory such as its usefulness as a predictor of vocational outcomes such as satisfaction, stability, achievement persistence and job performance. A range of opinions were presented in this special issue in response to Tinsley’s paper (e.g., Dawis, 2000; Gati, 2000; Hesketh, 2000; Prediger, 2000). Debate continued with Arnold (2004) discussing the “congruence problem in John Holland’s theory” (p. 95). Congruence however, has been extensively studied and research attests to its usefulness as a construct (Betz, 2008) although it has modest predictive power (Nauta, 2010). The extent of the relationship between congruence, work satisfaction and performance is not as great as Holland may have expected (Nauta, 2013). Betz noted that consistency, differentiation and identity have not been extensively studied since 2000 and support for his predictions related to these constructs is mixed (Nauta, 2010, 2013).

Holland's influence in career theory and practice has been significant (D. Brown, 1990; Leung, 2008; Spokane, 1996), as demonstrated by its application to a wide range of career materials such as interest inventories, occupational information, books and computer programs. Several instruments have been developed to specifically measure personality according to Holland's theory. These include the Strong Vocational Interest Blank (Strong & D. P. Campbell, 1981), the Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland, 1985c) and the Vocational Preference Inventory (Holland, 1985b). Further, Holland has applied his RIASEC typology to occupations (G. D. Gottfredson, Holland, & Ogawa, 1982), so that occupations can be coded in the same way as personality. Thus, in applying Holland's theory, the degree of fit, or congruence, between personality type and occupational type is also used to indicate the level of job satisfaction and stability. Holland's influence in career research has also been significant. His work has stimulated more research about vocational behaviour than about vocational environments (L. S. Gottfredson & Richards, 1999). Holland's work with Gary Gottfredson on the Position Classification Inventory (PCI) (G. D. Gottfredson & Holland, 1991) enables jobs to be rated according to the frequencies of activities, values, and perspectives that may also be organised according to his theory's RIASEC types (Nauta, 2013).

Holland's (1992) theory emphasised that an individual's heredity and interactions with their environment contribute towards the development of type, and that vocational predictions for a person based on his theory work better when contextual variables such as age, gender and socioeconomic status are taken into account. He also conceded that chance can play a role in vocational choice (Holland, 1985a). This addressed criticism of Holland's approach as being simplistic and underestimating the need for career counselling (Weinrach & Srebalus, 1990). It is also reflective of trends in career counselling and the need to place career assessment within a framework of a dynamic interaction of multiple contextual factors. L. S. Gottfredson (1981) supported this notion and indicated that there is value in the career assessment devices, but that they need to be viewed in the light of the career decision maker's situation, that is, context. Moreover, given the modest potential of Holland's congruence construct to predict work satisfaction (Nauta, 2010), career counsellors should encourage their clients to see their RIASEC scores as "only one of a complex array of individual difference variables that might be used to identify potentially good-fitting work environments" (Nauta, 2010, p. 17). Thus the onus is on users of specific career assessment devices such as Holland's Self-Directed Search and the Strong Interest Inventory to not use them in isolation without addressing the contextual issues relevant to the individual. This is evident in the application of the Integrated Structured Interview process (McMahon & M. Watson, 2012b) which demonstrates how results from the Self-Directed Search may be incorporated by career counsellors in a holistic narrative career counselling interview process. Nauta (2010) suggests that Holland's theory may be useful in times of rapid change as the RIASEC codes may provide clients with families of occupations rather than single occupational titles. Nauta cautions however, that many individuals have

limited options available to them and that interests may not be the basis on which career choice is made.

Since his 1973 theory revision (Holland, 1973, 1997), Holland's theory has more adequately reflected the life-span perspective of career development, therefore addressing the notion of development over the life-span. In terms of the process of career development, Holland (1992) claimed that "the reciprocal interactions of persons and successive jobs usually lead to a series of success and satisfaction cycles" (p. 54). This is in line with Super's notion that career decision-making is a developmental process. In particular, Holland discussed the relationship between the individual and the environment in terms of congruence, satisfaction and reinforcement (Holland, 1992), and suggested that incongruence is resolved by changing jobs, changing behaviour or changing perceptions. However Holland's theory remains "primarily descriptive, with little emphasis on explaining the causes and timing of the development of hierarchies of the personal modal styles" (Zunker, 2006, p. 35). Holland focused on the factors influencing career choice rather than on the developmental process leading to career choice (Zunker). Holland (1996b) concurred with this sentiment, claiming that a lack of information on development issues or the process of change is a weakness of his and other typologies. In considering revisions of his theory, Holland (1996a) emphasises his determination not to lose what he sees as a virtue of typologies, that is their capacity to "organize large amounts of information about people and environments in an economical and accessible fashion" (p. 404).

Holland's theory has been researched in nearly every continent (Fouad, 2007). While there is general support for his structure in the United States (Fouad), his theory has also been criticised for not adequately addressing the career development of women, racial and ethnic, and other groups. For example, women tend to score more highly than men on the Social type while men score more highly than women on the Realistic type (Nauta, 2013). M. Watson, Stead and Schonegevel (1998) found that Holland's hexagon does not adequately account for the structure of interests of black South African adolescents. These authors remind practitioners who use instruments based on Holland's theory of the need to do so "in the context of relevant information about possible cultural, gender and socioeconomic status differences in the structure of interests of their clients" (p. 26). In the Chinese context, in a study of Hong Kong high school students, Leung and Hou (2005) found mixed support for Holland's structure of vocational interests. In a meta-structural analysis of Chinese data, Long and Tracey (2006) cautioned about using and interpreting RIASEC measures in non-US countries, Holland (1992) himself cautioned that "age, gender, social class, physical assets or liabilities, educational level attained, intelligence, and influence" (p. 12) may affect the successful application of his theory. As illustrated by the previous example, much research has been generated to examine the applicability of Holland's theory to women and across cultures and more is needed. In relation to culture, Spokane and Cruza-Guet (2005) concluded that "definitive conclusions may be some years away" (p. 34). This issue is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

While Holland's contribution to career development theory is unquestioned, his theory provides only a partial, though detailed, account of career development, which gives rise to D. Brown's (1987) concern about the usefulness of Holland's model to life career counselling. His concern stems from Holland's lack of attention to other life roles and the relationships between them.

#### *Theory of Work Adjustment*

Similar to Holland's theory, Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) theory of work adjustment (TWA) reflects a long history of research and strong links to the psychology of individual differences with its emphasis on measurement and quantification of data. Considered as a person-environment fit model (Betz, 2008; Swanson & Schneider, 2013), the theory of work adjustment evolved from trait and factor models and has been described as a matching model (Betz, 2008). TWA began in the 1950s as the theoretical framework for the University of Minnesota's Work Adjustment Project (Dawis, 2002, 2005). D. Brown (2003) described TWA as "one of the most carefully crafted theories of career choice and development" (p. 32) with carefully defined constructs that have been operationalized through a number of assessment instruments. While the theory has been refined over time and the number of propositions has grown from 17 in 1984 (Dawis & Lofquist) to 19 in 2005 (Dawis), "the content and substance remain the same" (Dawis, 2005, p. 20) and there has been no reformulation or restatement since 2005. While TWA may be used to assist individuals to make career choices, its primary emphasis is on the how individuals adjust to work environments (Swanson & Schneider, 2013).

The theory of work adjustment "provides a model for conceptualizing the interaction between individuals and work environments" (Dawis & Lofquist, 1976, p. 55) and may be regarded as a person-environment interaction model (Dawis, 2005). While person-environment fit applies to similarity between individuals and their work environments, person-environment interaction refers to a reciprocal interaction between individuals and their environments (Swanson & Schneider, 2013). Dawis (2005) explained that TWA is comprised of two models. The first, a predictive model, focuses on how individual's satisfaction with and satisfactoriness for their work environment may predict tenure. The second, a process model, focuses on how fit between individuals and work environments is achieved and maintained.

Betz (2008) explained that the focus of TWA is the two individual variables of needs and skills and that the corresponding environment variables are reinforcers and skill requirements. TWA is "founded on four basic psychological concepts: ability, reinforcement value, satisfaction, and person-environment correspondence" (Dawis, 1994, p. 34). Person-environment correspondence, the central construct in TWA, relates to the fit between person and environment and also to the co-responsiveness of person and environment to each other (Dawis, 2005). In essence, individuals exist in a dynamic relationship with their work environments, in which they seek to develop satisfactory relationships by making continual adjustments. However the theory of work adjustment places greater emphasis on adjustment

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over time than Holland's (1997) theory, and in so doing more clearly establishes its place as a person-environment fit theory. It also reflects a move away from point in time career choice to adjustment over the lifespan, another difference between trait and factor theory and person-environment fit theory, and a point on which Holland's theory is less clear.

According to TWA, an individual has requirements or needs of a work environment, and a work environment in turn has needs or requirements of a worker. For example, a worker may need money or good working conditions, whereas a work environment may need certain work skills. A situation where the interaction is mutually satisfying (Dawis, 1996, 2005), that is, when the needs of both the individual and the environment are co-responsive to each other's needs, is described as correspondence; "Correspondence ... is the ideal state" (Dawis, 1996, p. 85). When correspondence occurs, both parties are satisfied. In this theory, the term satisfaction is reserved for the individual's experience of the environment, and the term satisfactoriness is reserved for the environment's experience of the individual, that is, whether the individual is meeting the expectations of the environment. Thus correspondence occurs when the worker is both satisfied and satisfactory (Dawis, 1996, 2005). Correspondence can lead to stability and tenure. The concept of tenure which is based on satisfaction and satisfactoriness is fundamental to the TWA's predictive model (see Dawis, 2005) and to career planning using this model. When the individual and the environment are in equilibrium, work adjustment has been achieved (Swanson & Schneider, 2013). Dissatisfaction of the individual or the environment results in disequilibrium in the system and thus serves as motivation for change. Dissatisfied individuals may choose to either change themselves or change the environment. When individuals are unsatisfactory, they may decide themselves to upskill or the environment could choose to retrain them or discontinue their employment (Swanson & Schneider, 2013). "Whatever satisfies needs are called reinforcers because they can maintain or increase the rate of behavior" (Dawis, 1996, p. 80). Examples of reinforcers include achievement, advancement, co-workers, activity, security, social service, social status, and variety. Individuals and environments behave in order to have their needs met.

Application of the theory of work adjustment may facilitate better understanding of work trends, career stages, and career adaptability for diverse cultural groups (Swanson & Schneider, 2013). Swanson and Schneider (2013) suggest that TWA may be useful for understanding how ongoing change affects individuals, the work environment and the relationship between them. In relation to career counselling, TWA draws heavily on the psychology of individual differences. Specifically, the matching process first articulated by Parsons, and the quantification of data, that is assessment, are important components. Both ability and values are measured as part of the assessment process. It is the belief that if a person can be described in certain terms and environments can be similarly described, as in Holland's theory, then matching can occur. The theory of work adjustment considers work skills and work needs. While it is acknowledged that all individuals have a range of skills, it is also acknowledged that they have abilities, that is, "the potential to acquire the

skills required by a task and – by extension – a job or occupation” (Dawis, 1996, p. 83). Dawis (1994) described skills and needs as surface traits and abilities and values as source traits. Source traits provide the structure of personality and generally remain stable over time, whereas surface traits may change with time or in response to situations. This is clearly acknowledgment of the individual’s capacity to change over time, and recognition of a process variable in career development. The measurement of abilities enables a matching of a much wider range of occupations than does the measurement of skills. Underlying work needs are the reinforcers or values. Thus a dynamic interaction occurs between the needs of the individual and the needs of the work environment. The individual’s behaviour is reinforced when needs are met, and reinforcement generally occurs when the values of the individual and the work environment correspond. “Thus, personality structure for TWA is constructed from abilities and values” (Dawis, 1996, p. 84). TWA may be useful in understanding individuals who are dissatisfied with their work or alternatively are unsatisfactory (Swanson & Schneider, 2013).

The theory of work adjustment not only includes descriptions of the characteristics of personality, but it also pays attention to the identification and labelling of process variables. The terms used to describe work behaviour include “celerity, to denote the quickness with which the worker initiates interaction with the work environment; pace, to denote the level of effort expended in the interaction; rhythm, to denote the pattern of pace in the interaction, whether steady, cyclical, or erratic; and endurance, to denote how long the worker remains in the interaction” (Dawis, 1996, p. 85). Over time an individual will develop unique behavioural tendencies which in this theory are equated with personality style. The process variables described above can also be used to describe the environment.

However the needs of the work environment and the needs of the worker are not static. Change in either may lead to dissatisfaction. Work adjustment, therefore, is a dynamic and ongoing process between the individual and the environment who are continually trying to satisfy and be satisfied. Discorrespondence occurs when correspondence is not reached. The degree to which individuals can tolerate discorrespondence depends on their flexibility. During these times the individual and the environment may make adjustments to improve satisfaction or satisfactoriness. Individuals who are more flexible can “tolerate greater degrees of discorrespondence and are less easily dissatisfied” (Dawis, 1996, p. 86). During times of discorrespondence, the individual may adjust in one of two ways; they may try to change the environment, described as active mode, or they may try to change themselves, described as reactive mode. For example, an individual who prefers to work on his/her own may move to another room (active mode) or may rationalize that his/her concentration will not be disturbed by the presence of others (reactive mode). When adjustment fails, the worker may leave the work environment. How long a worker persists in trying to adjust may indicate their level of perseverance (Dawis, 1996). Thus an individual’s adjustment style is determined by their flexibility, active adjustment, reactive adjustment, and perseverance (Swanson & Schneider, 2013), and is also related to their personality style discussed earlier. Flexibility refers to the amount of discorrespondence an

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individual can tolerate before they move to make an adjustment. Active adjustment refers to individuals making a change to the environment (e.g., trying to adjust the environment's expectation of or rewards for them) whereas reactive adjustment refers to individuals making an adjustment to themselves (e.g., to their needs). Perseverance refers to how long an individual will tolerate discordance before making an adjustment.

More recently, TWA has been associated with positive psychology because of its emphasis on satisfaction (Swanson & Schneider, 2013). Consistent with positive psychology, satisfaction promotes well-being and alleviates distress. For most of its history, the theory of work adjustment has focused on one environment, specifically the work environment. However, its constructs and relations have also been generalised to other environments through person-environment correspondence (PEC) theory (Lofquist & Dawis, 1991; Dawis, 2002). Fundamental to person-environment theory is the notion of two entities, person and environment, interacting (Dawis, 2002). For a detailed description of PEC theory see Dawis (2002). The emphasis on ability and values in the theory of work adjustment establishes it as a theory of content, while the dynamic interaction described delineates it as a person-environment fit theory.

### BORDIN'S PSYCHODYNAMIC MODEL OF CAREER CHOICE

Bordin's (1990) psychodynamic model of career choice synthesises previous applications of psychodynamic theory to career choice. Since this theory was first proposed, it has received little subsequent attention and has essentially become of historic interest in the field. In line with the psychodynamic perspective, Bordin turned to development in early childhood to account for work motivation, and in particular focused on the development of personality. His emphasis is on the development of personality in relation to the role of work and play in an individual's life. Essentially, Bordin suggested that people seek work which they "find intrinsically interesting or from which they can derive pleasure" (Lent & S. D. Brown, 2013, p. 3). Research is yet to provide a strong empirical base for Bordin's hypotheses on work and play. A basic tenet of the theory is that individuals seek enjoyment in work as in other areas of their lives. Bordin proposed that play is intrinsically satisfying, and it is the satisfaction of simply engaging in an activity which distinguishes play from work. Individuals express their need for play in work as in other areas of their lives by looking for something they will enjoy doing.

Bordin claimed that in young children play and work are fused, and that through the process of development and socialisation, play and work become demarcated. He accounted for this demarcation in terms of "spontaneity, which is used to refer to elements of self-expression and self-realization in our responses to situations" (Bordin, 1990, p. 105). In essence, this means that the activities of young children are intrinsically satisfying. However as they mature, play becomes more complex and they become aware of the effort needed to achieve mastery as well as the external pressures of others, for example parents and care givers, to achieve

mastery, sometimes perceived in terms of rewards and punishments. A process of socialisation and “external pressures from parents and caretakers” (p. 107) affects how an individual distinguishes play from work. In particular, Bordin (1990) claimed that “overemphasis on analysis, activation of self-consciousness, and overambition may be intimately tied to failures to fuse work and play” (p. 108). Extreme effort converts spontaneity into compulsion, that is, activities are performed out of a need or compulsion to do them rather than out of an intrinsic desire to do them because they are enjoyable. In adults, this process is reflected in the reality of needing to earn a living and the desire for personal meaning and creative expression.

It is also during these early years that individuals build a unique identity, drawing to some extent from the influences of their parents. This point illustrates the developmental and contextual themes of Bordin’s (1990) theory related in particular to identity development. He acknowledged the influence of biologically and culturally determined sex roles in identity development, as well as the level of parental support and nurturance, and the need to be unique from but connected to others. However Bordin claimed that development is largely an unconscious process where the individual draws from aspects of both parents as well as the extended family. While Bordin’s (1990) theory is “directed towards the participation of personality in career development and the series of choices that comprise it” (p. 104), he also acknowledged the interaction of a number of influences including economic, cultural, geographic, biological and accidental factors, and in turn their influence on personality.

In terms of career choice and satisfaction, Bordin described the evolution of personality as the mechanism which guides cognitive processes at times of career choice, whether those points have arisen for external or internal reasons. External reasons include particular stages of the education system, and internal reasons include the desire for increased work satisfaction. In making choices, individuals conduct a self assessment and gauge the probabilities of success based on intrinsic satisfaction, which may include “curiosity, precision, power, expressiveness, and concern with right and wrong and justice, as well as ... nurturance” (Bordin, 1990, p. 114).

While Bordin’s theory has been discussed as a theory of content, it is clearly much more broadly based than traditional theories in this area, for example the work of Holland. In this regard, Bordin questioned traditional career guidance practices and their emphasis on the realities of work, for example monetary reward, rather than on self-realisation through work. His emphasis in career counselling focuses much more on the individual striving for inner meaning. He advocated the use of guided fantasy, dreams, examining life histories, and imaginative approaches. He also advocated examining client’s feelings, an approach which still remains underemphasised in the field (Kidd, 2004, 2011). Bordin’s approach is clearly a significant move away from the tradition of matching approaches with their emphasis on objectivity and more in line with recent narrative approaches founded in constructivism and social constructionism that are more accommodating of qualitative assessment and creative processes. The breadth of



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Bordin's approach is also reflected in the work of D. Brown who focuses on a particular trait but sets the counselling process into a much broader context.

### BROWN'S VALUES-BASED THEORY

Values are central to D. Brown's (1996a, 2002b) theory, and as a result locate him in this chapter as a theory of content. However, his theory reflects the trend in career development theory to move towards holistic approaches. Thus, while it emphasises the importance of a particular trait, values, D. Brown's theory also acknowledges the concept of development and the broader context in which individuals exist. D. Brown claimed that career theory has all but ignored ethnic and cultural minorities (D. Brown, 2002b, c) and in his later work focused on both work values and cultural values. Thus, D. Brown's theory is indicative of the significant shift that has taken place in theorising about career development and recognition that career theory focused too much on Eurocentric values (Šverko, Babarović, & Šverko, 2008) such as "individualism, future time orientation, moderate need for self-control, emphasis on activity, and a core belief that humans should dominate nature" (D. Brown, 2003, p. 48). D. Brown originally presented his theory in two discrete sections (D. Brown, 1996a, 2002b), the first focusing on values and the role they play in career choice, and the second focusing on career counselling. These will be discussed separately.

Influenced by the work of Rokeach (1973), D. Brown (2003) defined values as "beliefs that are experienced by the individual as standards regarding how he or she should function" (p. 49). He claimed that individuals judge their own performance and that of others against a core set of beliefs or values (D. Brown, 1995), which are important not only in the selection of life roles but also in the satisfaction derived from life roles (D. Brown & Crace, 1996). D. Brown (1996a) claimed that expected outcomes are the most important source of motivation in decision making, and that individuals decide on the basis of values which outcomes are more important than others, that is "values form the basis for attributing worth to situations and objects" (D. Brown & Crace, 1996, p. 212). D. Brown (1996a) claimed that values have been overlooked in career development counselling and research. Therefore in his theory he attempted to draw attention to the function of values in decision-making and career counselling, as well as to set values into the broader context of life roles and life space. D. Brown's choice of focus on work values and cultural values is related to the identification of work values as a critical variable in career development, and evidence that cultural values also play an important role in career development (D. Brown, 2002c, 2003).

D. Brown and Crace (1996) advanced seven propositions about the function of values in decision making, whereas D. Brown (1996a) advanced six, possibly a reflection of the developmental stage of this theory. In D. Brown's (2002b, c, 2003) subsequent theoretical statements, he described eight propositions which reflect the incorporation of propositions related to cultural values into his theory. The concepts proposed in his earlier work will be discussed first followed by the propositions of his later work.

Fundamental to D. Brown's theory (1996a) is the concept that each person develops a relatively small number of values which "dictate cognitive, affective, and behavioral patterns" (D. Brown, 1996a, p. 341). Individuals are exposed to values laden messages throughout their lives from a variety of sources including family, friends and the media. Values therefore "develop as a result of the interaction between inherited characteristics and experience" (D. Brown, 1996a, p. 340). Cultural background, gender, and socioeconomic status influence opportunities and social interaction and thus there is variation of values both within and between subgroups of society. Acknowledgment of such issues reflect the more recent development of D. Brown's theory and the trends towards contextualism which are discussed in chapter 4.

As values are formed they become crystallised in the mind of the individual and prioritised, and the extent to which this occurs relates to cognitive clarity (D. Brown, 1996a). Values are said to be crystallised when they can be labelled and articulated by an individual which enables them to judge their own behaviour and compare themselves with others (D. Brown, 1995). Once values are crystallised, they can then be prioritised. D. Brown and Crace (1996) claimed that individuals who are described as "high functioning people" (p. 219) have values which are well crystallised and prioritised.

In order to make decisions, it is desirable that individuals have their values crystallised and prioritised. D. Brown and Crace (1996) went on to claim that "Values with high priorities are the most important determinants of choices made, providing that the individuals have more than one alternative available that will satisfy their values" (p. 212). Thus individuals are most likely to be satisfied when their choice is compatible with their values. Clearly then, they also need information about their options in order to determine whether their values will be satisfied by a decision. In the case of career decision-making, this clearly reflects the trait and factor principle of matching self-knowledge with world of work knowledge. However unlike trait and factor theorists, and possibly a reflection of the development of this theory in the 1990s rather than earlier, D. Brown acknowledged life roles other than worker and the interaction of these roles, and included them as an integral part of his theory. In particular he acknowledged that different roles may satisfy different values. "The result of role interaction is life satisfaction, which differs from the sum of the marital, job, leisure, and other roles satisfaction indices taken separately" (D. Brown & Crace, 1996, p. 217). However, a combination of factors, not only satisfaction of values, determines success in a role. While it is yet to be studied, D. Brown (1996a) predicted that "a combination of role-related skills and aptitudes and values congruence between the individual and the principal person(s) in the environment will be the best predictor of success in a role" (p. 355). This prediction of success differs from both the theory of work adjustment and Holland's theory as neither one makes predictions about success.

D. Brown also advanced propositions that reflect the broadening of his theory to include consideration of cultural values. These propositions are presented slightly differently with eight propositions being listed in D. Brown (2002b, c), while D.

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Brown (2003) lists seven. Subsections are included in four of the propositions. In summary, his propositions are:

1. Highly prioritised work values are the most important determinants of career choice for people who value individualism if their values are crystallised and prioritised;
2. Individuals who hold collective social values and come from families and/or groups who hold the same social value either defer to the wishes of the group or family members or are heavily influenced by them in the occupational decision-making process;
3. When taken individually, cultural values regarding activity (doing, being, being-in-becoming) do not constrain the occupational decision-making process;
4. Because of differing values systems, males and females and people from differing cultural groups enter occupations at varying rates;
5. The process of choosing an occupation involves a series of “estimates” of one’s abilities and values, skills and abilities required to be successful in a particular occupation, and the work values that the occupational alternatives will satisfy;
6. Occupational success is related to job-related skills acquired in formal and informal educational settings, job-related aptitudes and skills, SES, participation in the work role and the extent to which discrimination is experienced, regardless of the social relationship value held; and
7. Occupational tenure is partially the result of the match between the cultural and work values of the worker, supervisors and colleagues.

D. Brown’s eighth proposition which is not presented in his 2003 work relates to the primary bases for job satisfaction. In essence, he proposed different bases for people with an individualist social value compared with those who hold a collective social value. Research support for D. Brown’s propositions varies (D. Brown, 2002b).

The second focus of D. Brown’s theory is its contribution to career counselling, although in later theoretical statements his emphasis on counselling has been reduced. In his earlier work (D. Brown, 1996a; D. Brown & Crace, 1996) outlined five assumptions underlying his ‘values-based approach to career counselling’ which deviate considerably from the predominantly matching process of trait and factor theory and person-environment fit theory. In particular, his first assumption stresses the importance of considering career decisions in relation to other life roles rather than as isolated events. D. Brown (1996a) claimed that “a central premise of the theory is that, because people function holistically, career counseling should only be conducted in the context of the entire life space and other life roles” (p. 368). This is in line with conceptualisations about the importance of context and the place of work in people’s lives (Blustein, 2006; Richardson, 2000), and is in contrast with Holland’s career counselling process which has been criticised as being simplistic. Therefore just as values should be considered in the context of all life roles, so too should the work or job role. Life “roles may function synergistically, may be in conflict, or may be compensatory” (D. Brown, 1995, p.

8) in relation to the satisfaction of values. D. Brown discussed inter-role and intra-role conflict, both of which result in a lack of satisfaction, and may lead to transitions. Intra-role conflict occurs when the values of the individual are not reinforced in the workplace, for example a worker may have different values from his/her supervisor (D. Brown & Crace, 1996). Inter-role conflict occurs when the current job is in conflict with another role, for example, when a less satisfying role (work) takes time away from a more satisfying role, parenting (D. Brown & Crace, 1996). These conflicts may be compared with the concept of change in the theory of work adjustment which brings about the need for adjustment.

The concept of role conflict leads into the second of D. Brown's assumptions, the need for the counsellor to assess the degree of crystallisation and prioritisation of values and role relationship problems. In addition, counsellors need to be able to assess mood problems such as anxiety or depression, the third of D. Brown's assumptions. Dealing with such issues in career counselling draws attention to the links between career and personal counselling. In this regard, D. Brown (1996a) emphasised the importance of the counselling relationship which he regards as essential for success. Such thinking distances D. Brown from traditional exponents of trait and factor career counselling.

In the fourth of his assumptions, D. Brown acknowledged the importance of other variables such as career interests in the career counselling process, and advocated that counsellors should be able to "translate various types of psychological data into values-based terms" (D. Brown, 1996a, p. 357). Following on from this is his fifth assumption, that clients will be able to make effective decisions if they "understand their values and have values-based information" (D. Brown, 1996a, p. 357), a matching concept which aligns him with the trait and factor theorists.

D. Brown's (2002b) later theoretical statement with its increased emphasis on cultural values makes four suggestions for career counsellors and then elaborates them with nine assumptions that underpin his own career counselling work. He suggested that career counsellors be prepared to:

- help their clients become familiar with the values-laden expectations in the workplace
- identify ways that their values may diminish their success in the Eurocentric workplace
- encourage clients to maintain their cultural values while adapting to the Eurocentric workplace in some instances
- become advocates for change in the workplace so that people who hold values that may not be those of the dominant culture can be successful (D. Brown, 2002b, p. 491)

Emanating from D. Brown's theory, and in the tradition of trait and factor theories, the Life Values Inventory (LVI) was developed (D. Brown & Crace, 2002; Crace & Brown, 2002) and is freely available online. Designed for both adolescents and adults to assist in decisions about life roles, the LVI measures the 14 life values of Achievement, Belonging, Concern for the Environment, Concern for others, Creativity, Financial prosperity, Health and activity, Humility,

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Independence, Interdependence, Objective analysis, Privacy, Responsibility and Spirituality. D. Brown and Crace (2002) suggest that the LVI may be useful in a range of counselling situations (e.g., careers, retirement, leisure, and team building).

D. Brown's (1996a) contribution to career development is threefold. First, he has drawn attention to values, an important concept in career development which had previously received little in depth attention. In particular, he has drawn attention to the importance of cultural values in the career development process and in career decision-making. Second, he forged important links between the positivist approach of trait and factor theory and more recent approaches to career counselling, and to some extent demonstrates how they can co-exist. He does this in the counselling process by combining a focus on a trait, values, with the concept of interconnected life roles. Third, he raised awareness of cultural sensitivity in the career counselling process. Despite this important contribution to the field, there has been little subsequent development of D. Brown's theory for over a decade. D. Brown's theory draws attention to the developmental status of career theory and highlights some of the similarities and differences between the theories of content. A discussion of similarities and differences between the theories of content will conclude this chapter.

### SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEORIES OF CONTENT

In this chapter and in each of chapters 3 and 4, a table will be presented to illustrate the similarities and differences between the theories discussed in the chapter. Listed on the X axis are the influences on career development discussed in chapter 1, and presented in the Systems Theory Framework in chapter 9. On the Y axis are listed the theories discussed in the chapters. Shading on the table illustrates the degree of emphasis placed on particular influences by each theory. The tables compare the emphasis of theories within chapters, and may also be used to compare across chapters.

The theories of content have played a useful role in elaborating influences on career development. As illustrated in [Table 2.2](#), individual influences such as abilities, interests, personality and values have been focused on more than the contextual or process influences. As mentioned previously, in the main these theories do not account for development, either development of the focus variable of the theory or the broader issue of career development. Similarly, while most of the theorists discussed in this chapter acknowledge the influence of contextual variables on career development, they do not do so in any systematic way and this has not been the focus of their work. They also acknowledge the interaction of different traits, yet do not expound on the links between them. These acknowledgments could be seen as recognition of the issue of rapprochement and convergence, although this is not stated. What is evident since the second edition of this book is that a considerable body of research is still being generated in relation to the theories of content, primarily related to the work of Holland. Despite this, to date, there have been no significant advances or restatements of the theories of

content although research may stimulate theoretical advances. The following discussion will be structured around the three main elements of this theory group – the content variables of self-knowledge and work environment, and the process variable of matching which constitutes the major approach to career decision making in this group of theories. In addition the process variable of person-environment fit will be discussed.

### *Self-knowledge*

Each of the theories discussed in this chapter emphasises the importance of self-knowledge in the decision making process. Self-knowledge covers a broad array of information. However most theories emphasise knowledge about one trait at the expense of other traits. For example, Holland focused on a typology of interest/personality, Bordin on personality, Dawis and Lofquist and D. Brown on values. Further, D. Brown's emphasis on cultural values has for the first time in a career theory of content provided an emphasis on non-Eurocentric culture and its implications for career choice and decision-making.

Clearly then, the same traits can be addressed by theorists, but they can be conceptualised differently. For example, "Bordin, unlike Holland, does not posit that personality is static" (D. Brown, 1990, p. 353), and claimed that as a result of the changing personality different career needs emerge. Thus Bordin's conceptualisation of personality is more dynamic than Holland's. Dawis and Lofquist and Brown both focused on values, but D. Brown placed greater emphasis on the importance of values in career choice. However in both theories work satisfaction is connected to values being met in the workplace. According to Dawis (1996), reinforcers or values such as achievement, social service or status, can satisfy needs. These are similar to Holland's concepts of satisfaction, stability and achievement when congruence is achieved.

In line with differential psychology, the self-knowledge described by all of the theories is quantifiable. It is only Bordin who deviates from this by drawing attention to the importance of subjective self-knowledge. D. Brown (1996a) also deviated away from the objective by drawing attention to the affective components of anxiety and depression, but in line with the quantifiable nature of self-knowledge in these theories, suggested that these should be assessed.

### *Work Environment*

Parsons and Holland have made the most significant contribution in terms of knowledge about the world of work, Parsons through what he termed the industrial investigation and Holland through his classification of occupations and work environments. Parsons developed a classification of industry groups and aligned this with what he described as "the conditions of efficiency and success" (p. 47). These were "fundamentals" (p. 27) such as health, enthusiasm, reliability, and interest, and knowledge pertinent to a particular industry, such as "ability to draw and work by drawings" (p. 51) for the "mechanical trades, manufacturing and

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construction, transportation, etc.” (p. 51) industries. This information clearly paved the way towards a matching process in career decision making between self-knowledge and work-knowledge, the process of “true reasoning” previously discussed. Holland’s theory also typifies this approach. He emphasised the characterisation of work environments by the people who occupy them. Work environments can be classified by type in the same way as individuals because their chief characteristics reflect the personalities of the individuals who work in them. This is a point of considerable variation from the theory of work adjustment where the work environment is viewed independently of the characteristics of the workers. Holland’s theory implies that matching self-knowledge with knowledge about the type of individuals who characterize particular occupations or work environments will lead to person-environment congruence. In a welcome addition to career theory, D. Brown drew attention to the cultural values of workplaces which may tend to be Eurocentric and the implications of this for individuals who hold different cultural values.

### *Person-environment Fit*

Much of the criticism that has been centred on these theories concerns their perceived static nature. However Rounds and Tracey (1990) disputed this critique, claiming that it has never been assumed that individuals are incapable of change. In fact dynamic interplay is evident in the descriptions of most of the theories.

Since the days of Parsons, the essence of these theories has remained the same, that is, a matching process between self-knowledge and world of work knowledge which leads to career choice. Little has changed in the decision-making processes advocated by these approaches since the days of Parsons, and there is still a heavy reliance on methodical, rational, cognitive processes which presumably result in a choice of best fit for the individual.

The exception to this is again found in the work of Bordin who allowed for subjectivity to enter into the decision making process. Bordin’s allowance for the subjective experience of the individual distinguishes him from the other content theorists and is more reflective of the constructivist approaches, such as that of Young et al. (1996) discussed in chapter 4. Exception is also found in the work of D. Brown who takes into account mood problems such as anxiety and depression.

With the move from its trait and factor origins to person-environment fit approaches discussed previously in this chapter, there has been a shift in the theories of content away from matching for an initial career choice as in the days of Parsons to adjustment throughout the lifespan. This is evident in the work of Holland, Dawis and Lofquist, and D. Brown. However, it is addressed more explicitly and comprehensively by Dawis and Lofquist than by the other theorists.

Parsons’ attempts to maximise the fit between individuals and jobs reflect the visionary nature of his work and has been termed ‘congruence’ by theorists such as Holland. Holland (1994) claimed that his concept of congruence equals the concept of correspondence proposed by Dawis and Lofquist to explain the fit between the

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Table 2.2 Influences on career development – Theories of content

	No acknowledgement	Acknowledgement	Significant emphasis			
CONTENT INFLUENCES	Parsons	Five Factor Model	Holland	Dawis & Lofquist	Bordin	D. Brown
Intrapersonal System						
– ability						
– aptitudes						
– interests						
– gender						
– age						
– skills						
– ethnicity						
– sexual orientation						
– beliefs						
– health						
– disability						
– values						
– world of work knowledge						
– personality						
– self-concept						
– physical attributes						
Social System						
– family						
– peers						
– community groups						
– education institutions						
– media						
– workplace						
Environmental-Societal System						
– political decisions						
– historical trends						
– employment market						
– geographical location						
– socioeconomic status						
– globalisation						
PROCESS INFLUENCES						
Recursiveness						
Change Over Time						
Chance						



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individual and their environment. Dawis (1996) extends knowledge of the adjustment process further by actually labelling the process variables of celerity, pace, rhythm, and endurance, which describe interaction between the individual and the work environment or work behaviour.

Parsons believed that congruence not only had benefits for both employees and employers, but that it also served as a motivator. This is reflective of the theory of work adjustment's concepts of satisfaction and satisfactoriness which describe a situation where the needs of both the work environment and the individual are met. Significantly Parsons did not view congruence as static but rather as a fluid construct responding to individual's development and adaptation, a concept in keeping with person-environment fit theory, in particular, the theory of work adjustment (Dawis, 1994). In this regard, Dawis and Lofquist also introduced the notion of discordance, which describes the situation where the needs of one or both parties are not being met which results in a period of adjustment and could be followed by the individual changing jobs, an outcome described by Holland (1994) as resulting from "incongruent interactions" (p. 50). D. Brown (1996a) also addressed discordance or incongruent interactions by discussing intra-role conflict, conflicts in the workplace which lead to a lack of satisfaction and the need for adjustment. However, as one of the more recently developed theories, it extends the concept of congruence further by setting work into the context of life and discussing inter-role conflicts which occur between the work role and other life roles. Of interest since the first edition of the present book, is D. Brown's attention to cultural values and its impact on the fit between workers and environments (2002b, c).

## CONCLUSION

In this discussion of the similarities and differences between the theories of content, it can be seen that the "person-environment congruence model is a direct descendant of Parsons' formula" (Zytowski & Swanson, 1994, p. 309), and that his formula provides a conceptual consistency through this group of theories. The development of the theories presented in this chapter spans the period from the early 1900s to the present time, and as such reflects developmental trends in conceptualisations of career theory. For example, early theories such as those of Parsons and the early work of Holland are less dynamic as they pay less attention to process, and while not ignoring contextual influences do not adequately address them. Refinements of Holland's work and theories proposed later, for example the work of Dawis and Lofquist reflect acceptance by the early 1970s of the concept of development. However unlike Holland's theory where the inclusion of process is a refinement of the theory, process in the form of adjustment was included as an integral part of Dawis and Lofquist's work. In fact, the process variable of adjustment is much more integrated into the theory of work adjustment than it is into the work of Holland, and indicates how this group of theories can be viewed as dynamic. D. Brown's theory reflects yet another trend in the development of career theory, that of the acceptance of contextual influences. This is evident in D.

#### THEORIES FOCUSING ON CONTENT

Brown's consideration of work roles in relation to other life roles and his incorporation of cultural values into the latest version of his theory. Thus there is a clear historical trend in this chapter which reflects a broadening of the base of career development theory.

However, it is clear from this discussion of the theories of content, that they tell only part of the story of career development. Significantly, it is the process of career development that is to a large extent overlooked in these theories. This is reflected in criticisms, discussed previously, that the theories are static and not dynamic. These theories have attempted to address such criticism by moving towards a person-environment fit approach and acceptance of the concept of career adjustment in addition to career choice. However, despite these efforts, the theories of content do not provide extensive or satisfactory explanations of the process of career development, and this omission paved the way for the promotion of theories which addressed the issues of process in career development. The theories of process will be discussed in chapter 3.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORIES FOCUSING ON PROCESS

The previous chapter discussed the early history of career development theory and its origins in the ‘matching’ models steeped in the tradition of differential psychology. In addition it discussed subsequent work on content variables and the shift toward person-environment fit approaches. As previously discussed, the 1950s was a time of change in the history of career theory. Some of these changes can be attributed to the release of developmental theories, which viewed career choice as part of a developmental process rather than as a matching exercise. The advent of the developmental theories represents what Savickas (2002) claimed is the second grand perspective of vocational psychology, the “individual development” (p. 149) view of careers. Developmental theories are not seen as competing with the matching theories discussed in chapter 2, but rather both groups of theory complement each other. This is reflected by Super’s (1992) sentiments that it is not valid to ask which group of theories is better as neither is “sufficient without the other” (p. 59).

Time is an important consideration in the developmental approaches and takes into account that career choice is not just a single static decision, but rather is a dynamic developmental process involving a series of decisions made over time. This theme was alluded to in the theories discussed in chapter 2 but was not addressed in any depth by any theory, except perhaps the theory of work adjustment. Acceptance of the concept of development of career was firmly established by 1971 (Hackett et al., 1991). Career development does not imply vertical progression, but rather the emergence or shaping of a career over time. In fact, career decisions are made throughout life, and as a result the developmental theories are referred to as life-span approaches. Five theories will be discussed here to illustrate the developmental approaches, specifically the work of Ginzberg and his colleagues (Ginzberg 1972, 1984; Ginzberg et al., 1951), Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994), Savickas (2001, 2002, 2005), Tiedeman and O’Hara (1963), Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) and Miller-Tiedeman (1999), and L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005). Despite the notion of life-span career development being widely accepted, it is apparent that since the second edition of this book, with the exception of Savickas’ career construction theory, little further revision or restatement of these theories has occurred.

#### THE WORK OF GINZBERG AND COLLEAGUES

The work of Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma (1951) is of historical significance as it represents one of the earliest deviations from the existing static trait and factor theories, and as such is a vital contribution to developmental theory.

Savickas (2008b) explained how Ginzberg was critical of the vocational guidance movement for its lack of a theory base and its emphasis on using assessment instruments to match people and occupations. Thus Ginzberg et al.'s theory is generally considered to be the first to focus on occupational choice from a developmental standpoint. Ginzberg and his colleagues gave rise to the notion that career choice is a developmental process, and proposed that career development begins in early childhood and progresses through three broad stages which conclude with career choice in early adulthood. During this time many career decisions are made as the individual deals with the tasks of preadolescence and adolescence. The three stages through which the individual passes are the fantasy, tentative and realistic stages. In addition, the tentative stage contains the substages of interest, capacity, value and transition, and the realistic period was divided into exploration, crystallisation, and specification. The theory proposed that an individual moves through these stages by their late teens or early twenties.

In the fantasy stage the occupational preferences expressed by an individual generally reflect identification with the role of an adult they know and a lack of reality, rather than a mature career decision. The tentative stage involves a maturational process during which individuals at first base their career choice on their interests and abilities, and later begin to weigh these up against their capacities, the second phase of the stage. In the tentative stage there is also a growing awareness of their work values and the need to order them (Ginzberg, 1984). The final phase of the tentative stage, transition, corresponds with the first phase of the realistic stage, exploration. During the third and final stage of this model, the realistic stage, individuals have "reached the point of integrating likes and dislikes with capabilities and tempering these two variables with society's and personal values" (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996, p. 29). The individual then begins to implement these tentative choices and evaluate feedback on their vocational behaviour. Eventually crystallisation occurs when the young person "makes a definitive occupational commitment" (Ginzberg, 1972, p. 169) and the process of career development is completed.

The original theory comprised the three key elements of process, irreversibility, and compromise (Ginzberg, 1972). Process referred to the career decision-making that occurred from prepuberty until late teens or early 20s, when individuals were believed to make an occupational commitment. This commitment to or choice of an occupation was seen as being irreversible, basically the concept of a job for life. Irreversibility was based on the notion that previous education and training had channelled the individual down a path that once set, provided little opportunity to change direction. In addition, choice of an occupation was seen as being a compromise as individuals seek to "find an optimal fit" (Ginzberg, 1972, p. 169) between factors such as their interests and abilities, and the reality of the world of work. Thus, while their theory is developmental, the choice process closely resembles that of the matching models discussed in chapter 2. This possibly reflects its place as the first developmental theory, and its proposal at a time when the matching approaches were firmly established as the theory base.

Career choice was thought to depend on four variables. The first, reality, took into account the constraints of the world of work and the pressures of the environment. Second, the educational process was considered a significant influence on career choice as the nature of the education an individual received could restrict or enhance opportunities. Third, the interaction between individuals and their environment and the work satisfaction they received were described as emotional factors affecting career choice. The fourth factor was personal values and the need to satisfy them in a career choice. These factors are evidenced in the previous description of the stages.

While the theory is predominantly developmental, there are similarities to the matching models as previously discussed, and also to the contextual models to be discussed in chapter 4. For example, Ginzberg and his colleagues took into account contextual influences such as education, socioeconomic status, and the realities of the world of work. Consideration of development in context, particularly during the 1950s, is commendable. However, the original theory was based on studies of young men from upper income homes, and as a result did not attend to the career development needs of women, minority or disadvantaged groups, points for which the theory has been criticised.

While this theory was visionary in its time, it quickly dated with the acceptance of the concept of lifelong career development which resulted in Ginzberg (1972, 1984) subsequently revising the original theory. Probably the most significant change Ginzberg conceded was that career development does not conclude in early adulthood, but rather is a lifelong process where individuals continue to seek satisfaction out of career decisions by improving “the fit between their changing career goals and the realities of the world of work” (Ginzberg, 1984, p. 180), a comment reflective of the person-environment fit approach discussed in chapter 2.

Ginzberg (1972) described the reformulated theory as sociopsychological rather than developmental because he took into account what he referred to as “reality factors”, locating the individual at the centre of the decision making process as the “prime mover” or “principal actor” (Ginzberg, 1972, p. 175). In this way Ginzberg (1972, 1984) bridged the person-environment fit theories, the developmental theories and the contextual theories. In bridging the contextual theories, he drew attention to the familial and environmental circumstances of the individual. In particular, Ginzberg acknowledged changes in personal and family circumstances, the career development needs of women, and minority and disadvantaged groups. He also acknowledged what he termed “constraints on occupational choice” (Ginzberg, 1972, p. 173), including low socioeconomic circumstances, parental education and values, prejudice and discrimination, educational inadequacies, linkages among institutions, and access to guidance information. Thus, Ginzberg and his colleagues were among the first to acknowledge that factors outside the individual may affect the career development of individuals. Little, if any, attention had previously been paid to such issues, a trend which continued in the career development literature. Although Ginzberg did not explain how to address these issues, raising awareness of them in the career development field was significant.

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Once reformulated, the essence of the theory was restated in 1972 as “Occupational choice is a lifelong process of decision making in which the individual constantly seeks to find the optimal fit between career goals and the realities of the world of work” (Ginzberg, 1984, p. 179). It was restated again in 1984 as: “Occupational choice is a lifelong process of decision making for those who seek major satisfactions from their work. This leads them to reassess repeatedly how they can improve the fit between their changing career goals and the realities of the world of work” (Ginzberg, 1984, p. 180).

These restatements portrayed career development as a lifelong process where individuals attempt to derive satisfaction from their work by making adjustments and choice. Their reference to “those who seek major satisfactions from their work” also hints at life roles other than work which may provide satisfaction in life. In addition they reflected a change from a static to a dynamic theory with the shift from the concept of compromise to that of optimisation (Ginzberg, 1972), which portrays the individual as actively trying to seek satisfaction from their work and making career moves accordingly. In addition, the revised theory placed less emphasis on irreversibility. The three elements of the revised theory are stated as follows:

1. Occupational choice is a process that remains open as long as one makes and expects to make decisions about his work and career. In many instances it is coterminous with his working life.
2. While the successive decisions that a young person makes during the preparatory period will have a shaping influence on his later career, so will the continuing changes that he undergoes in work and life.
3. People make decisions about jobs and careers with an aim of optimizing their satisfactions by finding the best possible fit between their priority needs and desires and the opportunities and constraints that they confront in the world of work (Ginzberg, 1972, p. 172).

Clearly the concept of person-environment fit is evident in these statements, as the process of choice has now become dynamic rather than static with the ideas of lifelong career choice, seeking work satisfaction and adjustments to meet personal needs.

The work of Ginzberg and his colleagues is significant as the first developmental theory, and Ginzberg’s (1972, 1984) revisions are significant in their ability to respond to changes in thinking about career development. Despite the revisions, the theory has declined in importance with Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) noting that it is an example of how theories may become time bound. However, it has served as a major stimulus in the development of career theory, and the notion of development it proposed is still of undeniable importance in the field.

### SUPER’S LIFE-SPAN, LIFE-SPACE APPROACH

Although the work of Ginzberg and his colleagues was a forerunner in the field of developmental career theory, their work has been overshadowed by the extensive

and significant work of Donald Super. Super's work and that of Holland discussed in chapter 2 secure them positions as the most influential writers in the field of career development. While Holland's early work, steeped in the tradition of differential psychology, is narrowly focused on vocational type and career choice, Super's work encompasses the broader perspective of life-span and life-space career development. So significant is the work of Super that the *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* published a special memorial issue on his work and his contribution for career guidance and counselling in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Marques, 2001). This special issue highlighted the international impact of his work and featured the work of authors from a range of countries including Australia (Patton & Lokan, 2001), Spain (Repetto, 2001), Canada (Dupont, 2001), Japan (Watanabe-Muraoka, Senzaki, & Herr, 2001), and the United Kingdom (Watts, 2001). More recently, Leung (2008) identified Super's theory as one of the five most influential theories that have guided career development practice and research in the United States and internationally. In this regard, Betz (2008) claimed that Super "revolutionised" the field with his claim that vocation was not a "one-point-in-time decision" but rather a developmental process over the lifespan (p. 365).

Super advanced previous thinking on career development by suggesting that it did not conclude in young adulthood, but rather continued throughout the life-span of an individual. Not only did Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994) shift the focus of career development away from approaches based on differential psychology, he also changed "the focus of vocational psychology from occupations to careers" (Savickas, 1994, p. 22), and provided "the main impetus to expand vocational guidance to encompass career counseling" (Savickas, 1994, p. 4). The changing focus of Super's theory was reflected in its renaming from career development theory, to developmental self-concept theory to the final life-span life-space theory (Savickas, 1997a). Super, therefore, has provided a major contribution to the field of career development at both a theoretical and practical level.

The work of Super and Ginzberg and their colleagues changed the focus of career choice from that of a static point-in-time event to that of a dynamic process where career development was viewed as an evolving process. Despite widespread acceptance of this concept, there has been a long standing tendency for career choice and career development to be viewed as static events (Hackett et al., 1991), and for career interventions to be based on matching approaches.

Developmental psychology was a major influence on Super's early work which emphasised life stages and vocational tasks. The other major influence was self-concept theory, referred to as the "keystone" (Super, 1990, p. 221) of his theory. Super believed that the development of vocational self-concept is a part of life stage development, and that career choice and development is a "process of developing and implementing a person's self-concept" (Leung, 2008, p. 120). Development and self-concept remained central features of Super's work throughout his long career. Super (1990) expressed regret that he did not adopt the term personal construct (Kelly, 1955) rather than self-concept as he believed that

term to be more reflective of “personal perception and construction of the environment” (p. 223). Constructs may be likened to a point of view “internally generated” by individuals on the basis of their interaction with and experiences of the world (Law, 1996a, p. 55), whereas concepts are previously known and may be learned from others. Thus an individual could be seen to be more ‘active’ in relation to constructs which have the capacity to change over time, and ‘passive’ in relation to concepts which are more established.

While Super’s work is most often associated with the developmental theorists, his later work (Super, 1980, 1990, 1992) is actually far more comprehensive, and “brings together life-stage psychology and social role theory to convey a comprehensive picture of multiple-role careers, together with their determinants and interactions” (Super et al., 1996, p. 126). Indeed, Super’s theory spans the “content, process and outcomes of career choice and development” (Hartung, 2013 b, p. 83) across the lifespan. Super’s most lasting contribution has been his life-span, life-space approach to career development, where he not only presented a stage model of career development, but also “constructed an overarching framework within which to explore career development” (Savickas, 1994, p. 22). His framework comprises the three elements of the developmental lifespan, the contextual psychosocial space, and the self and self-concepts which reflect their theoretical bases in differential and developmental psychology and self-concept theory (Hartung, 2013b). Thus, Super conceptualised career development as “fluid, dynamic, continual, and contextual” (Hartung, 2013b, p. 83). The following description of Super’s work will begin with the propositions which outline his key concepts and reflect their foundation in differential and developmental psychology and also in self-concept theory. This will be followed by a discussion of self which is central to his theory, and then a discussion of his life-span, life-space approach to career development.

### *Propositions*

The essence of Super’s theory is contained in his list of propositions. Originally he listed ten propositions, but the list was expanded to fourteen with subsequent refinements of his theory. The propositions reprinted from Super (1990, pp. 206-208) are as follows:

1. People differ in their abilities and personalities, needs, values, interests, traits, and self-concepts.
2. People are qualified, by virtue of these characteristics, each for a number of occupations.
3. Each occupation requires a characteristic pattern of abilities and personality traits, with tolerances wide enough to allow both some variety of occupations for each individual and some variety of individuals in each occupation.
4. Vocational preferences and competencies, the situations in which people live and work, and, hence, their self-concepts change with time and experience, although self-concepts, as products of social learning, are



increasingly stable from late adolescence until late maturity, providing some continuity in choice and adjustment.

5. This process of change may be summed up in a series of life stages (a “maxicycle”) characterized as a sequence of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline, and these stages may in turn be divided into (a) the fantasy, tentative, and realistic phases of the exploratory stage and (b) the trial and stable phases of the establishment stage. A small (mini) cycle takes place in transitions from one stage to the next or each time an individual is destabilized by a reduction in force, changes in type of manpower needs, illness or injury, or other socioeconomic or personal event. Such unstable or multiple-trial careers involve new growth, reexploration, and reestablishment (recycling).
6. The nature of the career pattern – that is, the occupational level attained and the sequence, frequency, and duration of trial and stable jobs – is determined by the individual’s parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, education, skills, personality characteristics (needs, values, interests, traits, and self-concepts), and career maturity and by the opportunities to which he or she is exposed.
7. Success in coping with the demands of the environment and of the organism in that context at any given life-career stage depends on the readiness of the individual to cope with these demands (that is, on his or her career maturity). Career maturity is a constellation of physical, psychological, and social characteristics; psychologically, it is both cognitive and affective. It includes the degree of success in coping with the demands of earlier stages and sub-stages of career development, and especially with the most recent.
8. Career maturity is a hypothetical construct. Its operational definition is perhaps as difficult to formulate as that of intelligence, but its history is much briefer and its achievement even less definitive. Contrary to the impressions created by some writers, it does not increase monotonically, and it is not a unitary trait.
9. Development through the life stages can be guided, partly by facilitating the maturing of abilities and interests and partly by aiding in reality testing and in the development of self-concepts.
10. The process of career development is essentially that of developing and implementing occupational self-concepts. It is a synthesizing and compromising process in which the self-concept is a product of the interaction of inherited aptitudes, physical makeup, opportunity to observe and play various roles, and evaluations of the extent to which the results of role playing meet with the approval of superiors and fellows (interactive learning).
11. The process of synthesis of or compromise between individual and social factors, between self-concepts and reality, is one of role playing and of learning from feedback, whether the role is played in fantasy, in the counselling interview, or in such real-life activities as classes, clubs, part-time work, and entry jobs.

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12. Work satisfactions and life satisfactions depend on the extent to which the individual finds adequate outlets for abilities, needs, values, interests, personality traits, and self-concepts. They depend on establishment in a type of work, a work situation, and a way of life in which one can play the kind of role that growth and exploratory experiences have led one to consider congenial and appropriate.
13. The degree of satisfaction people attain from work is proportional to the degree to which they have been able to implement self-concepts.
14. Work and occupation provide a focus for personality organization for most men and women, although for some persons this focus is peripheral, incidental, or even non-existent. Then another foci, such as leisure activities and homemaking, may be central. (Social traditions, such as sex-role stereotyping and modeling, racial and ethnic biases, and the opportunity structure, as well as individual differences, are important determinants of preferences for roles such as worker, student, leisurite, homemaker, and citizen.)

Super's 14 propositions clearly illustrate the breadth of his theory, and demonstrate that it is much more than simply a developmental theory. As reflected in his propositions, Super's approach draws on aspects of career development "taken from developmental, differential, social, personality, and phenomenological psychology and held together by self-concept and learning theory" (Super, 1990, p. 199). Significantly this description is reflective of the move away from complete reliance on differential psychology towards the integration of concepts from a number of fields. In line with differential psychology are Super's propositions 1, 2, 3, 9, 12, and 13. Propositions 4, 5, 8, and 10 are linked to developmental psychology. Social learning principles are reflected in propositions 4, 6, 11, and 14, and phenomenology is reflected in propositions 1, 7, and 10. This illustrates that a reliance on only one field is not adequate to explain the complex process of career development, and reinforces the importance of Super's work in highlighting the need for integration.

### *Self*

As reflected in these propositions, the concept of self is a major focus of Super's theory because it is in self that life-span, life-space information is processed. Self-concept theory was viewed by Super as a way of combining the differing perspectives of differential and developmental psychology into a more cohesive explanation of career development (Hartung, 2013b). Super recognised self as "something that emerges, grows, and changes over time (Phillips, 2011, p. 163). In addition to recognising that self-concept is developed and implemented over the course of a career, Super introduced the sense of potentiality to career theory along with the possibility that individuals could direct changes in self (Phillips, 2011). Super (1990) referred to the individual as the "socialized organizer of his or her experience" (p. 221). "The Self (the person) and his or her Role Self-Concepts are the culminating products of the interaction of the person and the environment"

(Super, 1992, pp. 41-42). Super et al. (1996) described the importance of conceptions of self in relation to career choice and adjustment. Conceptions of self may be objective (vocational identity) or subjective (occupational self-concept). The acknowledgment of subjective processes in career development was a significant deviation away from the trait and factor traditions of objective and quantifiable data. In combination, the objective and subjective conceptions of self give an indication of how individuals publically and privately view their career development and their life roles (Hartung, 2013b).

Vocational identity, sometimes described as occupational identity, refers to the combinations of traits which apply to an individual and which may be observed by self or others and assessed through instruments such as interest inventories (Super et al., 1996). Descriptions generated by these means provide a point of comparison with others in an objective way.

While vocational identity is an objective concept, occupational self-concept refers to the personal meaning individuals ascribe to their traits, for example how particular traits have developed. Occupational self-concept develops over time as a result of interaction between a number of factors, such as aptitudes and the opportunity to see or perform certain roles. The fourth of Super's propositions, describes the process whereby self-concept changes over time through a process of social learning as a result of an individual's experience. Indeed, Super's life-span life-space approach suggests that individuals develop numerous self-concepts based on their experiences in a range of settings (Hartung, 2013b).

Self-concept implementation describes the process of an individual choosing an occupation that matches their image of themselves. The satisfaction that people derive from work is related to the extent to which they are able to implement their self-concepts. Super commented on the way careers evolve over time, and used the term "emergent career decision-making" (Freeman, 1993, p. 261) to refer to the process where successive career decisions by people are sharper and finer and may be different at different times in their lives. While self is central to decision making in Super's theory, Leung (2008) reminds us that in some cultures career decision making is not simply a process of self-concept implementation but more a process of negotiation and compromise within familial contexts to find an acceptable solution.

Career or vocational maturity, used interchangeably (Super, 1990, p. 209), was defined by Super (1990) as "the individual's readiness to cope with the developmental tasks with which he or she is confronted because of his or her biological and social developments and because of society's expectations of people who have reached that stage of development. This readiness is both affective and cognitive" (p. 213). Career maturity contributes to the career pattern followed by an individual. In brief, Super described it as "readiness to make career decisions" (Freeman, 1993, p. 261), suggesting that the attitudes of individuals and their knowledge of the world of work and of life stages may be used as measures of career maturity. Attitudes constitute the affective domain of career maturity and include "career planning, or planfulness; and career exploration, or curiosity" (Super, 1990, p. 213). The cognitive characteristics of career maturity include

knowledge and application of career decision making, knowledge of the world of work and the occupational preference. Realism may also be used to judge career maturity (Super, 1990), and may be done by comparing occupational self-concept and vocational identity with the reality of the occupational preference. It was Super's reference to time and subjective processes which set him apart from his predecessors in the career field. Subsequently however, with the evolvement of Super's theory towards that of career construction theory, the concept of career maturity has been replaced with that of the more psychosocial concept of career adaptability (Hartung, 2013b; Savickas, 2013a). Indeed, Savickas (2001) claimed that the linear, unidirectional and hierarchical nature of career maturity is not as relevant as the concept of career adaptability. Savickas (2005) described career adaptability as the readiness and resources to cope with tasks, transitions and work traumas across the life span.

#### *Life-span and Life-space*

Super's conceptualisations of self previously discussed are essential to his life-span, life-space approach to career development, in which the self is set into a broad context. These terms 'life-span' and 'life-space' basically represent the content and process of career development and represent the two dimensions of Super's theory, specifically, chronological time and contextual space (Hartung, 2013b). Life-span represents the process of career development throughout life and relates Super's stages of vocational development to recognised life stages. Life-space represents the roles individuals play during their lives and takes into account the contexts of their lives. Super (1980, 1990) depicted his life-span, life-space approach using diagrams of a 'life-career rainbow' and an 'archway model' both of which will be discussed. In reviewing Super's work, it is useful to examine his concepts of life-span and life-space in more detail.

*Life-span.* Super (1980, 1990, 1992) depicted the concept of life-span and life-space using the diagram of a rainbow, termed the "life-career rainbow" depicted in [Figure 3.1](#). Essentially the outer arches depict the longitudinal time dimension and the inner arches depict the psycho-social roles (Hartung, 2013b). The outside of the rainbow illustrates ages and stages of life. As depicted on the diagram, his five vocational development stages termed growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline correspond with the life stages of childhood, adolescence, adulthood, middle adulthood, and old age, and their approximate ages. Each life-stage is named to reflect "the nature of its principal life-stage task" (Super et al., 1996, p. 131). The term disengagement was subsequently favoured over the term decline (Super, 1992; Super et al., 1996). By introducing a developmental perspective, Super moved career psychology from a matching focus to a managing career development focus (Hartung, 2013b). In combination, Super's stages and tasks represent a career trajectory from childhood until retirement (Juntunen & Even, 2012). Growth is characterised by the exploration by children of the world around them through which they develop a future focus. During the

growth stage individuals attend school, develop work habits, gain more control over their lives and become future oriented (Super et al., 1996). These developmental tasks have been expressed in terms of four Cs: concern about the future, control over decision making, conviction to achieve, and competence in work habits and attitudes (Savickas & Super, 1993). As a result they may identify with role models, and begin to develop interests and an awareness of their abilities. Fantasy and play help children develop concepts of themselves in adult roles and envision themselves in work roles (Hartung, 2013b).

The exploratory stage is the time when career choices are narrowed and individuals frequently have selected and embarked on training or education to prepare them for their chosen vocation. It is during this stage that a vocational identity develops. This stage involves three career development tasks. The first task during this stage is that of crystallisation, the cognitive process of forming a vocational goal on the basis of vocational information, and awareness of traits such as interests and values. The next task, specification, involves the actual selection of a specific career. Implementation is the task that follows where individuals train for their selected vocation and begin employment.

This is followed by the stage of establishment during which time the individual gains employment. The first task is to stabilise their position in the organisation through becoming familiar with its culture and performing satisfactorily (Super et al., 1996). Once stabilised in an occupation, the next task for the individual is to consolidate his/her position. Some individuals may also choose the task of advancement or promotion and seeking higher levels of responsibility. Savickas (2011b) suggests that in the current less secure and more unstable world of work, this stage may be more protracted and variable.

Maintenance, the fourth stage, is characterised by “preserving the place one has made in the world of work” (Super, 1992, p. 44). Prior to entering this stage, individuals may evaluate their occupation and may decide to change organisations or occupations. If this is the case they then recycle through the stages of exploration and establishment, a minicycle. Those who do not change enter the stage of maintenance. The tasks of this stage include holding on, keeping up and innovating. Similar to establishment, this stage may be more difficult to attain in the present world of work that is characterised by less stable and secure employment (Hartung, 2013b). Indeed, Savickas (2002) suggested that management may be a more useful conceptualisation of this stage than maintenance because of its more proactive and positive connotations. The final stage, decline or disengagement, is associated with the tasks of planning for retirement, possible reduction of workload and eventual retirement. This stage represents a major transition during which individuals more fully develop self-concepts in roles other than work roles (Hartung, 2013b). Moreover, as the world of work has changed, this stage may involve options such as part-time work, temporary, or contract work or provide opportunities to work in different work roles that may be more fulfilling. Thus, because of such career patterns, it has been

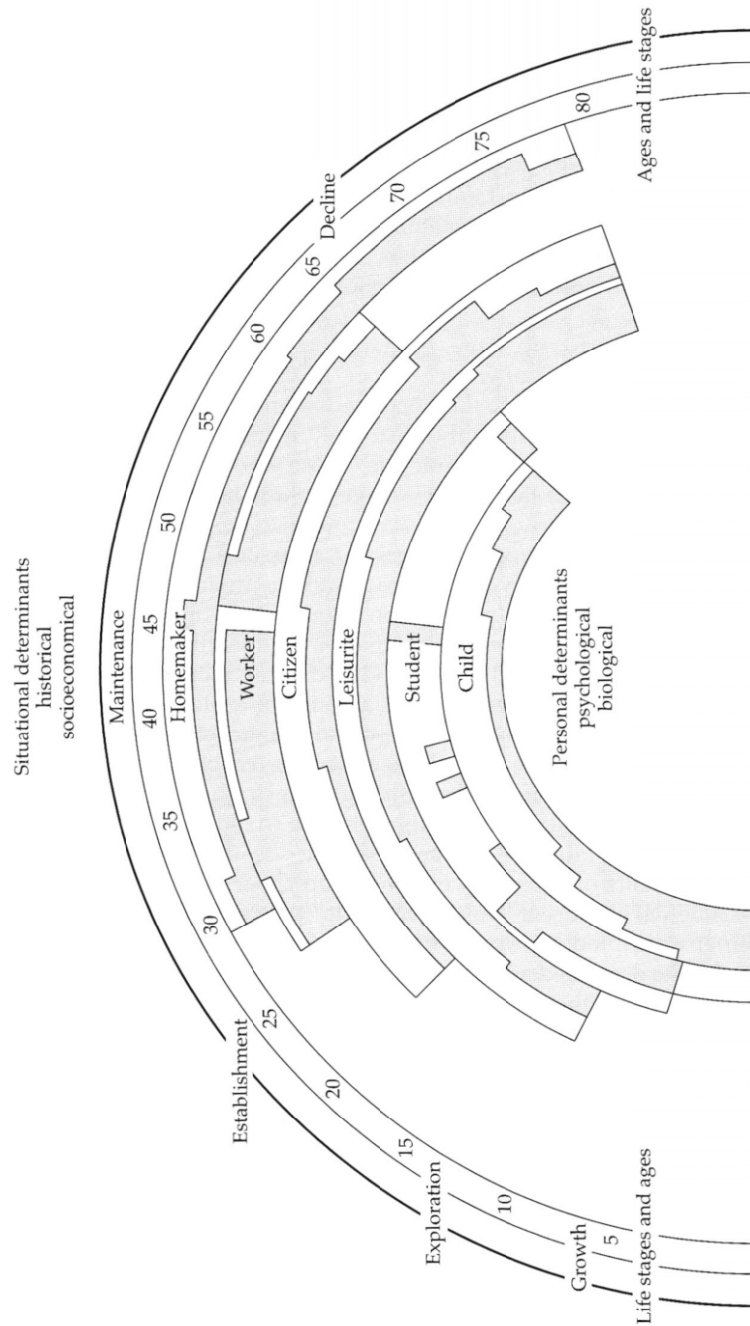


Figure 3.1 The life-career rainbow: Six life roles in schematic life-space (Reproduced with permission John Wiley & Sons, Inc., from *Career Choice and Development*, 3rd ed., by D. Brown and L. Brooks, p. 127)

suggested that this stage may no longer have relevance and needs reconceptualization (Vondracek & Hartung, 2002).

As mentioned in Super's proposition 5, progression through these broad stages is termed a "maxicycle". It is important to remember that Super saw the ages of transitions between stages as flexible and that individuals may recycle through stages, referred to as minicycles (Super, 1990). This could occur as a result of a planned or unplanned change. For example, individuals can expect to change jobs several times during their working life, and thus can also expect to recycle through the stages several times. The concept of recycling through stages is a refinement of Super's earlier work on stages which enhances its relevance to today's world. The more recent concept of career adaptability "aids development as individuals cycle and recycle through the five career stages over the life span" (Hartung, 2013b, p. 97).

The "life-career rainbow" (Super, 1980) also features personal and situational determinants of career development, an aspect of the model later described as a deficit, because it "merely suggests" the determinants (Super, 1994, p. 67). Super attempted to remedy this in his later work by presenting more detail in what he describes as a "second attempt" at the model (Super, 1992, p. 38). This attempt took the form of "A Segmental Model of Career Development" (Super, 1990, p. 200), also referred to as the "Archway Model" (Super, 1990, p. 201), in which he set out to specifically acknowledge the multifaceted nature of career development and the contributions of many theorists. This model, depicted in [Figure 3.2](#) and described later in this chapter, provides greater detail about the determinants by representing them individually as the stones of an arch. In a later publication (Super, 1992), it was referred to as "The Arch of Career Determinants" (p. 39) and the "determinant/choice model (the Arch)" (p. 41). These changes are illustrative of the refinements Super made to his theory over time in order that it remained as relevant as it was in the 1950s when it was first proposed.

*Life-space.* While the concept of life-span provides the process dimension of Super's model, the concept of life-space "provides the contextual dimension in the theory, denoting the constellation of social positions and roles enacted by an individual" (Super et al., 1996, p. 128). Super originally identified nine life roles: child, student, 'leisurite', citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent and pensioner, and four main contexts or 'theatres' where these roles were most commonly enacted, specifically the home, community, school (college and university), and workplace. In identifying these life roles, Super also illustrated the complexities of self-concept implementation as roles change and interact across time (Phillips, 2011). Typically some roles are more core to an individual's life than others; the importance ascribed to life roles by individuals was termed role salience by Super.

Significantly, Super acknowledged the fact that the work role may be only one of a number of roles an individual may hold at any one time, and this is illustrated on the life-career rainbow. In essence, the life-space "deals with the context of career development within a web of social roles individuals occupy and enact over

the life span” (Hartung, 2013b, p. 98). Thus, the life-career rainbow depicts the lifespace and the core roles individuals use to design their lives (Hartung, 2013b). Roles interact with each other and provide each individual’s life with a focus. Acknowledgment of multiple roles constituted an advance in conceptualising career development. Thus Super played an instrumental role in setting vocational roles into the broader context of an individual’s life, and in doing so emphasised the importance of role salience, a concept Super (1990) described as “the constellation of positions occupied and roles played by a person” (p. 218). The life-career rainbow (Figure 3.1) can be used to “focus on the concept and measurement of role salience” (p. 218), and demonstrate the importance of the major life roles to an individual as well as the relationship between the work role and other life roles. Life-role salience became the “pivotal construct” (Savickas, 1997a, p. 251) in that it allowed for roles other than the work role to be central in an individual’s life.

Interaction occurs between roles. For example, conflict between roles could occur when a less satisfying role takes time away from a more satisfying role, or alternatively roles may compensate in that satisfaction not found in one role is provided in another. Super et al. (1996) reminded us that “To understand an individual’s career, it is important to know and appreciate the web of life roles that embeds that individual and her or his career concerns” (p. 129). Richardson (1993, 1996) also discussed the importance of understanding the place of work in people’s lives in relation to understanding the meaning of career. It is also significant in light of much debate about the link between personal and career counselling which is discussed in more detail in part three of this book.

Using the Archway model (Figure 3.2), Super (1990) introduced the concepts of “personal determinants” and “situational determinants” which are the range of factors which could impact on career decision making. The Archway is referred to as a segmental model and visually portrays the psychological characteristics and social forces as the segments (stones) of each column (Hartung, 2013b). The “personal determinants” are represented on the left column of the archway, and include personal factors such as interests, values, needs, intelligence, special aptitudes, and aptitudes. The “situational determinants” are represented on the right column of the archway, and include contextual factors such as peer group, school, family, community, society, the labour market, and the economy. Developmental stages and role self-concepts are also included on the arch on each side of the keystone. As previously mentioned, the keystone of the arch is the person, “self”, in whom all of the variables are brought together. Super explained the need to understand the interaction between the segments of the model rather than which segment is most important (Freeman, 1993). Thus the emphasis is not on one or other of the segments, but rather on the interaction between all of them.

Super (1990) noted the “dynamic interaction of individual and society” (p. 203) although this interaction is not apparent in the Archway. In his later work, he proposed that “learning theory” is the “cement” with which the segments of the archway were bound together (p. 204). He claimed that individuals learn through interaction with the environment or social learning (interpersonal learning or learning from others), and terms this experiential or interactive learning. Learning



theory is reflective of the interactive nature of the model as the information is brought together in and processed by the individual, resulting in the shaping of their self-concept and occupational concept. However, the static nature of the model does not reflect this. Super himself suggested that lines representing interaction could be drawn on his model. Thus while his model reflects the variety of factors which influence career development, it does not adequately reflect the complexity of the interaction between the influences over time.

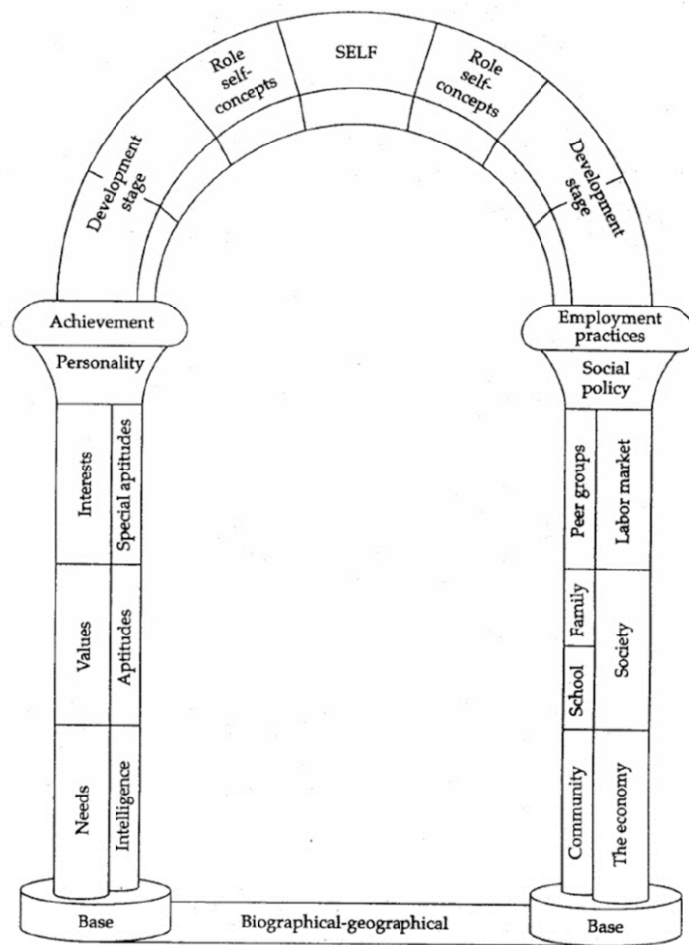


Figure 3.2 A segmental model of career development (From D. Brown & Brooks, 1990a)

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In his archway model, Super (1990) acknowledged the work of other theorists and included many factors which influence career development. This also supports his description of his work as a “segmental theory” (as discussed previously), and his claims that “there is no ‘Super’s theory’; there is just an assemblage of theories” (p. 199) that he has attempted to synthesise. Super’s theory has been criticised for its linear and normative focus (Juntunen & Even, 2012) even though he incorporated the process of recycling through stages in his theory. A further criticism of Super’s work is that the stages have not been tested in relation to women’s career paths (Juntunen & Even). However, his constant revisions and open-mindedness on the breadth of career development have made a lasting contribution to the field, and his work has stimulated thinking and further research long after his death (Barclay, Stoltz, & Chung, 2011; Blustein, 1997; Herr, 1997; Nevill, 1997; Perrone, Ægisdóttir, Webb, & Blalock, 2006; Phillips, 1997; Savickas, 1997a, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2013a).

### CAREER CONSTRUCTION: A DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY OF VOCATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Savickas (2001, 2002, 2005, 2013a) has updated and advanced Super’s (1957) theory on vocational development to publish a theory of career construction designed to enhance the relevance and applicability of Super’s work in the global world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Juntunen & Even, 2012). Indeed, Savickas’ theory, first proposed in 2001, could be regarded as the first theory of career development proposed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Savickas’ work reflects the need for career theory to update to remain relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and also the influence of the constructivist worldview. Savickas (2008a) credits the work of Tiedeman (discussed later in this chapter) as being influential in the conceptualisation of career construction theory, suggesting that he “should be honoured as the prime engineer of career construction” (p. 223). The description of this theory has been located in this chapter because of its close links with the work of Super. However, it is also clearly a theory of content and process and as such could comfortably be located in chapter 4. Since it was first proposed, career construction theory has had significant impact on theory, research and practice. Indeed, with Jean Guichard’s (2009) self-construction theory, it has informed the life design paradigm (Savickas, et al., 2009) that is making a major impact in the field.

Simply stated, career construction theory is about how individuals “build careers” (Savickas, 2013a, p. 147) and that they do this “by imposing meaning on their vocational behaviour and occupational experiences” (Savickas, 2005, p. 43). Savickas presents an overarching theory that incorporates the differential, developmental and dynamic views of career development that are reflected in chapters 2, 3, and 4 of this book. He claims to present the what, how and why of career development through the three key components of his theory, vocational personality, career adaptability, and life themes (Savickas, 2005). Savickas’ (2013a) most recent theoretical statement similarly focuses on the central notion of

self-construction but presents the three key components as self as actor, self as agent, and self as author.

Underpinning Savickas (2002, 2005) theory are 16 propositions that reflect the influence of personal constructivism, social constructionism and a contextualist perspective. They represent an extension and refinement of the 14 propositions outlined by Super (1990) and presented earlier in this chapter. In Savickas' (2013a) restatement of his theory, these propositions are not included. Prior to discussing Savickas' most recent theoretical statement and to illustrate the evolution of career construction theory, Savickas' (2005, pp. 45-46) propositions will now be presented.

1. A society and its institutions structure an individual's life course through social roles. The life structure of an individual, shaped by social processes such as gendering, consist of core and peripheral roles. Balance among core roles such as work and family promotes stability whereas imbalances produce strain.
2. Occupations provide a core role and a focus for personality organization for most men and women, although for some individuals this focus is peripheral, incidental, or even nonexistent. Then other life roles such as student, parent, homemaker, leisurite, and citizen may be at the core. Personal preferences for life roles are deeply grounded in the social practices that engage individuals and locate them in unequal social positions.
3. An individual's career pattern – that is, the occupational level attained and the sequence, frequency, and duration of jobs – is determined by the parents' socioeconomic level and the person's education, abilities, personality traits, self-concepts, and career adaptability in transaction with the opportunities presented by society.
4. People differ in vocational characteristics such as ability, personality traits, and self-concepts.
5. Each occupation requires a different pattern of vocational characteristics, with tolerances wide enough to allow some variety of individual in each occupation.
6. People are qualified for a variety of occupations because of their vocational characteristics and occupational requirements.
7. Occupational success depends on the extent to which individuals find in their work roles adequate outlets for their prominent vocational characteristics.
8. The degree of satisfaction people attain from work is proportional to the degree to which they are able to implement their vocational self-concepts. Job satisfaction depends on establishment in a type of occupation, a work situation, and a way of life in which people can play the types of roles that growth and exploratory experiences have led them to consider congenial and appropriate.
9. The process of career construction is essentially that of developing and implementing vocational self-concepts in work roles. Self-concepts develop

through the interaction of inherited aptitudes, physical make-up, opportunities to observe and play various roles, and evaluations of the extent to which the results of role-playing meet with the approval of peers and supervisors. Implementation of vocational self-concepts in work roles involves a synthesis and compromise between individual and social factors. It evolves from role playing and learning from feedback, whether the role is played in fantasy, in the counselling interview, or in real-life activities such as hobbies, classes, clubs, part-time work, and entry jobs.

10. Although vocational self-concepts become increasingly stable from late adolescence forward, providing some continuity in choice and adjustment, self-concepts and vocational preferences do change with time and experience as the situation in which people live and work change.
11. The process of vocational change may be characterized by a maxicycle of career stages characterized as progressing through periods of growth, exploration, establishment, management, and disengagement. The five stages are subdivided into periods marked by vocational development tasks that individuals experience as social expectations.
12. A minicycle of growth, exploration, establishment, management, and disengagement occurs during transitions from one career stage to the next as well as each time an individual's career is destabilized by socioeconomic and personal events such as illness and injury, plant closings and company lay-offs, and job redesign and automation.
13. Vocational maturity is a psychological construct that denotes an individual's degree of vocational development along the continuum of career stages from growth through disengagement. From a societal perspective, an individual's vocational maturity can be operationally defined by comparing the developmental tasks being encountered to those expected based on chronological age.
14. Career adaptability is a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's readiness and resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks of vocational development. The adaptive fitness of attitudes, beliefs and competencies – the ABCs of career construction – increases along the developmental lines of concern, control, conception, and confidence.
15. Career construction is prompted by development tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas and then produced by responses to these life changes.
16. Career construction, at any given stage, can be fostered by conversations that explain vocational development tasks and occupational transitions, exercises that strengthen adaptive fitness, and activities that clarify and validate vocational self-concepts.

Underpinning career construction theory are three foundational components. Originally expressed in terms of vocational personality, career adaptability, and life themes (Savickas, 2005), Savickas (2013a), assuming social constructionism as a metatheory and drawing on the work of McAdams (e.g., McAdams, 1995; McAdams & Olson, 2010), expressed his three core components as self as actor,

self as agent and self as author. Reflecting the relationship between these different expressions of the core components, Savickas (2013a) explains that “individuals, through their actions in the family, compose a social role as an actor, then adapt this role for use in the theatres of the school and community, and eventually author an autobiographical story that explains the continuity and coherence in occupational experiences” (p. 151). Thus career construction theory focuses on individuals’ behaviours as actors, striving as agents, and explanations as authors (Savickas, 2012, 2013a).

In describing the first component of career construction theory, self as actor, Savickas (2013a) explains how reputation and person types are constructed by individuals in social contexts, especially families. The component of self as actor takes an objective view of career by recognising the individual differences (Savickas, 2011b, c) of vocational personality, defined as an individual’s career-related abilities, needs, values and interests (Savickas, 2005). Individual differences are considered by career practitioners using categorisations provided by psychometric assessment instruments such as Holland’s (1997) RIASEC model. Essentially this component examines the content of career construction using Holland’s work on interests in relation to the self-organisation of individuals and the social organisation of occupations. Savickas (2013a) however takes a more dynamic view of Holland’s types, preferring to view the RIASEC types as self-constructing. Social construction theory views interests as a dynamic process rather than as stable traits, and recommends that they should not be used to the exclusion of other traits that may also suggest occupational congruence and job success. Savickas (2005) suggested that where interest inventories are administered, they should be used to generate possibilities rather than predictions.

In describing the second component of career construction theory, self as agent, Savickas (2013a) explains how during childhood, actors become “self-regulating agents who pursue goals of their own choosing” and adapt to “tasks, transitions and traumas” (p. 155). Agency develops through movement into and out of “educational and vocational positions” (Savickas, 2013a, p.155). The component of self as agent takes a subjective view of career. Essentially, this component is more focused on the process of career construction and draws on Super’s theory and also sociocognitive career theory (Savickas, 2011c). The process most emphasised in career construction theory is that of career adaptability which “deals with how an individual constructs a career whereas vocational personality deals with what career they construct” (Savickas, 2005, p. 48). Defined as “a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual’s readiness and resources for coping with current and imminent vocational developmental tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas” (Savickas, 2005, p. 51), career adaptability is a newer career construct that is more reflective of a knowledge-based society than Super’s well known construct of “career maturity”. Career adaptability is regarded as an optimal state because individuals are ready to respond to social situations (Juntunen & Even, 2012).

The stages and developmental tasks of Super’s (1990) theory are a feature of career adaptability across the lifespan. Super’ stages of growth (renamed

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orientation by Savickas [2013a]), exploration, establishment, management (sometimes termed stabilisation [Savickas, 2013a]), and disengagement may be regarded as adaptive behaviours and as a maxicycle across an individual's career. However, they may also be regarded as minicycles "around each of the many transitions from school to work, from job to job, and from occupation to occupation" (Savickas, 2005, p. 50). Individuals may recycle and reengage in the adaptive behaviours of the five stages through minicycles in each of the many transitions they may experience across the lifespan. The stages represent a structural account of career adaptability. Savickas (2013a) claims that success, satisfaction and well-being are indicators of effective adaptation which he says is an outcome of adaptivity, adaptability and adapting. In distinguishing between these terms Savickas (2013a) refers to "a sequence ranging across adaptive readiness, adaptability resources, adapting responses and adaptation results" (p. 157). Of these, career adaptability is the primary focus of career construction theory because it brings about change through the self-regulation resources that individuals bring to situations. Savickas (2013a) describes the four dimensions of response readiness and coping resources that constitute career adaptability as concern, control, curiosity and confidence. He conceptualised adaptive individuals as:

1. "Becoming concerned about their future as a worker.
2. Increasing personal control over their vocational future.
3. Displaying curiosity by exploring possible selves and future scenarios.
4. Strengthening the confidence to pursue their aspirations." (p. 52).

These are described in detail in Savickas (2005, 2013a). For each of the four dimensions, Savickas (2013a) proposes that adaptive (coping) behaviours are shaped by attitudes, beliefs, and competencies. He contends that the career problems of career indifference, career indecision, unrealism, and inhibition relate to the four dimensions of concern, control, curiosity and confidence respectively. Savickas (2013a) describes an interplay between his four dimensions which he suggests results in "goodness of fit as indicated by success and satisfaction" (p. 162).

In describing the third component of career construction theory, self as author, Savickas (2013a) explains that in late adolescence individuals are expected to "integrate their actions and agency into a unique identity supported by a life story" (p. 163). Life themes (referred to as career themes [Savickas, 2013a]), is a narrative component that focuses on the why of career behaviour through the themes that permeate the stories of individuals and bring a sense of coherence and unity across stories. Savickas (2005) suggested that to study vocational personality and career adaptability separately does not adequately take into account the dynamic nature of career construction and the integration of these other components into a whole. The meaning of career to individuals and its dynamic construction is revealed in stories which essentially "tell how the self of yesterday became the self of today and will become the self of tomorrow" (p. 58). Through story, individuals express their uniqueness and contextualise themselves in terms of time, place and role. While stories may appear as discrete, life themes pattern across stories to reveal a degree

of continuity that may unify them; “pattern is the primary unit of meaning” (p. 58). Savickas (2013a) explains how “the identity narrative expresses the uniqueness of an individual in her or his particular context by articulating goals, directing adaptive behavior, and imposing meaning on activities” (p. 163). Identity narratives, career themes, and character arcs are central to the self as agent component of Savickas’ theory. Constructing an identity narrative or career story involves selecting and organising events and incidents into an objective sequence that explains why things happened. Acquiring deeper meaning about identity narratives may be achieved through the identification of career themes that are present in and run through identity narratives and impose subjective meaning on them. Career themes integrate narratives and provide continuity across narratives. Character arcs are held within career themes and portray “where the individual started, is now, and wants to end up on some essential issue” (Savickas, 2013a, pp. 165-166). For each of actor, agent and author, Savickas (2012) advocates a different type of intervention. Specifically he suggests that vocational guidance is appropriate for actors, career education or coaching is appropriate for agents and career counselling or is appropriate for authors. Story is fundamental to career counselling interventions that are informed by career construction theory and he advocates the use of a structured career assessment interview called the Career Style Interview (Savickas, 1989). Savickas (2005) suggested that career interventions work best when all three components of his theory are taken into account.

A long standing criticism of career theory is its neglect of populations other than white, middle class western males. While Savickas’ theory has grown in influence and appeal, it is open to similar critique when considered in the context of a world in which many workers do not have the privileges of western middle class workers. Thus, this newer theoretical position is also not readily able to be applied in cultures and countries beyond the narrow traditional focus of many other theories. M. Watson (2013) offers a critique of this theory which highlights its shortcomings that is elaborated in chapter 6. In its relatively short history, career construction theory has begun to amass a body of research primarily related to career adaptability. Savickas has lead a team of international researchers from 18 countries in the international development and validation of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) that was reported in a special issue of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* (Leong & Walsh, 2012). A further body of research is being generated around Savickas’ (1989, 2011a) career style interview which is discussed in more detail in chapter 13.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC APPROACH

Similarities may be seen between the work of Savickas (2002, 2005) and Super (1990) and the work of Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) and Miller-Tiedeman (1999). For example, self is central to the work of Super and to that of Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman. Indeed, Savickas (2008a) describes David Tiedeman as the “first psychologist to systematically apply constructivist

epistemology to the comprehension of careers” and credits him with building the “blueprint for career construction theory” (p. 217). So significant was the contribution of David Tiedeman that it was recognised in a special section of *The Career Development Quarterly* (Richmond & Pope, 2008).

The original work in this approach was undertaken by Tiedeman and O’Hara (1963) and was later developed by Miller-Tiedeman (1988), Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990), and Miller-Tiedeman (1999). The work of Tiedeman and O’Hara (1963) will be discussed first followed by the work of Miller-Tiedeman (1988, 1999) and Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990).

Tiedeman and O’Hara (1963) viewed career development as an ongoing process of differentiating ego identity, and in so doing reflected their choice of Erikson’s (1959) psychosocial theory of ego identity as a framework on which to base their career decision-making model (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990). In a similar way to Super (1953), they proposed a developmental model of stages through which individuals pass during their lifetime. Unlike Super they placed greater emphasis on the personal development of the individual. Critical to this development of the self are biological, social and situational factors. McDaniels and Gysbers, (1992) described their decision-making model as “an attempt to help individuals bring to conscious awareness all of the factors inherent in making decisions so that they will be able make choices based on full knowledge of themselves and appropriate external information” (p. 56). Basically the model assists individuals to understand the “organization of self and environment” (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990, p. 316).

Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman proposed a model in two phases: anticipation and implementation. They also described the processes which underpinned progression through the stages of the model. The essence of their model is that events are experienced by the individual who in turn derives meaning from them. In brief, an individual develops an ego identity through the process of interacting with and collecting observations about the environment, and processing the collected information into a meaningful whole. These processes are termed differentiation and reintegration (also termed integration by Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990). “It is a period of collecting observations about the interaction (differentiation) and incorporating that information into the ego identity (integration)” (Minor, 1992, p. 26). Influences may be internally or externally generated. “Differentiating is a matter of separating experiences; integrating is a matter of structuring them into a more comprehensive whole” (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990, p. 312). Integration involves processing new information, combining it with existing information and integrating it into the ego identity. Thus an individual is “the whole of all earlier decisions” (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990, p. 314).

This approach has its base in decision-making theory which posits that within the continuous process of career development there will be points at which individuals are faced with decisions, for example job entry, educational choice and career change. The anticipation of career decisions comprises four stages: exploration, crystallisation, choice, and clarification. Exploration describes a



period of interaction with and feedback from the environment. During the next stage individuals begin to synthesise and order the information they have gathered, and crystallisation is said to occur when they are able to recognise patterns “in the form of alternatives and consequences” (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990, p. 313). Once crystallisation has occurred, choice follows and individuals begin to act upon it and prepare to enter an occupation, a process called clarification.

Once the four preparatory stages have been completed, the second phase of the career decision making process, implementation, occurs. This phase involves three stages: induction, reformation and reintegration. Induction occurs when choice has been implemented and individuals settle into their new workplace. During this stage individuals’ behaviour is mainly responsive as they learn what is expected of them in their new position. The next stage is that of reformation which occurs after individuals have gained their confidence and credibility in the organisation and can begin to assert themselves more. Finally the stage of integration occurs when a balance has been achieved between the organisation and the individual. This could be compared with Dawis and Lofquist’s (1976) concept of satisfaction and satisfactoriness.

While Tiedeman and O’Hara (1963) proposed seven stages, they did not propose that the stages were instantaneous or irreversible (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990), or that an individual’s progress may not deviate from the path set by their model. However they contended that “a person’s career normally moves forward in comprehensivity, toward unity” (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990, p. 314). A significant feature of their model was their belief that the tasks of each stage invoke a different range of emotions and subjective processes.

Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) contended that “how one advances one’s career can be seen in the language one uses; they proposed that the language people use about their career mirrors the self, as both a reactor and an actor, and discloses personal assumptions about the career” (p. 320). In essence they claimed that the language people use to describe their careers can be used as a measure of how far advanced they are in their career. In particular, they focused on defining ‘reality’ and identified two perspectives from which individuals describe their careers personal reality and common reality.

“Common reality is a notion similar to societal, parental, or other external expectations” (Minor, 1992, p. 27), or what ‘they’ say you should do (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990). Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1979) described attempts to predict what is right for another as ‘common reality’. They posited that if individuals are to advance in their career, they “need to become conscious of the difference between the two realities. Such consciousness gives individuals a choice of realities to follow” (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990, p. 320). As people become aware of the difference between the two realities, they can become more proactive. Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman’s theory holds as a premise an individual’s capacity to process information and arrive at their own ‘personal reality’ (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1979), that is, a decision that is right for them. Personal reality occurs when an individual understands that the “life process is guided by inner knowledge” (Miller-Tiedeman, 1988, p. 7). In applying this

theory, a goal is for individuals to be empowered enough to act on the basis of their personal reality. It will feel 'right' or good to the individual, irrespective of the expectations of others, and may be represented as an act, thought, behaviour or direction. Arriving at a personal reality is a subjective and evolutionary process because the individual continuously perceives and reacts to contextual information, and their decision can not necessarily be predicted by others, and may in fact be different from what others say the individual should do (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1979). This is due to their belief that people are open, self-organising systems capable of career development and career decision-making in their response to environmental input. This concept challenges both traditional models of career decision making based on logical, cognitive processes and traditional approaches to career guidance where the practitioner has taken a role akin to an 'expert adviser'.

The work of Tiedeman and O'Hara has formed the basis for Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman's (1990) theoretical position of "life is career" (p. 331) described by (D. Brown, 1990) as a "holistic theory" (p. 359), and by Miller-Tiedeman (1988) as a "process theory" (p. 5). This is a considerable deviation from traditional career theory in that it embraces process only, and the content is supplied by the individual (Miller-Tiedeman, 1988). Miller-Tiedeman's (1988, 1999) lifecareer theory presents a challenge to career theorists by proposing that individuals write their own career theory, and it is not for the career practitioner to impose someone else's theory on the individual. Indeed, Miller-Tiedeman (1999) asserted that "The major theme in the new careering model revolves around the individual as theory maker, as a teller of his or her own evolving story. ... Theory is not separate from experience. Theory merely mirrors a story of someone's experience" (p. 52). Miller-Tiedeman (1988) claimed that existing theories attempt "intellectual explanations of why things occur as they do in career" (p. 3), and that none deal with the "lived-in-the-moment life process" (p. 3) experienced by the individual. She is critical of the failure of existing theories to "personalise to the client's perspective" (p. 4), claiming that they fail to empower clients. This stems out of the differential psychology tradition of a hierarchical counsellor-client relationship.

Drawing on literature outside the career development field (described in more depth in chapter 8), lifecareer theory or the "New Careering" as used to title Miller-Tiedeman's (1999) book advocates a theory of life, not job, as career. It is based on quantum mechanics, self-organising systems theory, universe process theory, and decision-making theory, and as such is distinctly different from most other career theories. In describing the relationship between traditional theories and lifecareer theory, Miller-Tiedeman (1999) emphasised that the two bodies of literature operate in a symbiotic relationship. However, it is in the individual that the information becomes meaningful: "Lifecareer theory considers the individual a living, interactive system which provides self-correcting information. This offers the individual an opportunity to grow and unfold his or her own career theory, not look outside himself or herself for more erudite models from theorists" (p. 55).

## GOTTFREDSON'S CIRCUMSCRIPTION AND COMPROMISE THEORY

L. S. Gottfredson's (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005) theory is "concerned with both the content of career aspirations and their course of development" (L. S. Gottfredson, 1996, p. 181). In common with other theories are the assumptions that: "career choice is a developmental process beginning in childhood; occupational aspirations reflect people's efforts to implement their self-concepts; and satisfaction with career choice depends on how well that choice fits the self-concept" (L. S. Gottfredson, 1996, p. 181). While the theory is developmental in nature, there is also a similarity with the person-environment fit theories as L. S. Gottfredson assumes that vocational choice is a matching process and that "people seek jobs compatible with their images of themselves" (L. S. Gottfredson, 1981, p. 546). L. S. Gottfredson's theory is unique in its focus on the influence of social class and gender on career development (Juntunen & Even, 2012) which will be discussed in chapter 6. This focus aligns L. S. Gottfredson's theory with more recent theories that have emphasised socio-cultural context (Juntunen & Even). There has been no restatement or revision of L. S. Gottfredson's theory since 2005.

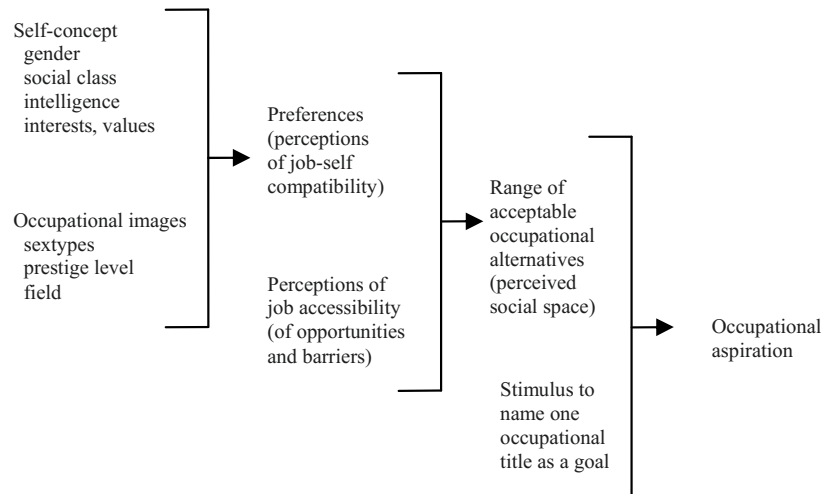


Figure 3.3 Relations among theoretical constructs (From L. S. Gottfredson, 1981)

L. S. Gottfredson (2005) represented the relations among her early theoretical constructs diagrammatically as shown in Figure 3.3. This clearly illustrates the relationship between her theory and the matching models. Based on compatibility between the two primary sources of information in her theory, self-concept (self knowledge) and occupational images (a concept bearing some resemblance to work knowledge), the individual forms preferences for occupations. These are later offset against perceptions of accessibility of opportunities and barriers, causing the range of acceptable occupational outcomes to be narrowed. L. S. Gottfredson's major contribution to the field is her description of the processes of circumscription

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and compromise and the resultant zone of acceptable alternatives within a range of occupations (Juntunen & Even, 2012).

L. S. Gottfredson (2002, 2005) presented a revision and extension of her theory to include the notion of self-creation and concisely explained this revision as follows:

The circumscription and compromise theory suggests that four developmental processes are especially important in the matching process: age-related growth in cognitive ability (cognitive growth), increasingly self-directed development of self (self-creation), progressive elimination of least favoured vocational alternatives (circumscription), and recognition of and accommodation to external constraints on vocational choice (compromise). (2005, pp. 72-73)

L. S. Gottfredson's theory presents a developmental model of four stages beginning in early childhood and ending in late adolescence. The stages reflect levels of mental development and the degree of self-knowledge integrated by the individual. Brief descriptions of cognitive growth and self-creation will be presented first. The process and stages of circumscription will then be discussed. Finally the process of compromise will be described.

### *Cognitive Growth*

L. S. Gottfredson (2005) explains that individuals' capacity for learning and reasoning increases with chronological age from birth through to adolescence, and this growth in mental competence affects their behaviour and lives. The two major products of mental competence are the development of a cognitive map of occupations and self-concept, both of which represent understandings of the occupational world. L. S. Gottfredson (2005) suggests that although children "all construct essentially the same cognitive map of occupations, they will develop increasingly individualized self-concepts" (p. 73). Essentially, L. S. Gottfredson's theory suggests that children begin to develop a social image of themselves in the social world (Betz, 2008).

### *Self-creation*

Drawing on the nature-nurture partnership theory of individual differences, L. S. Gottfredson (1996, 2005) extended her theory through the notion of self-creation. Nature-nurture theory "conceives of both individuals and environments as mutual creations of the other and as emerging simultaneously from an individual's stream of experience" (L. S. Gottfredson, 1996, p. 115). This theory stresses that individuals are self-directed and self-creating from birth, and that through experience their individuality develops. L. S. Gottfredson (1996) claimed that "it is only with the dawning and cultivation of self-knowledge that individuals become more the director and less the directed in their own lives" (p. 129). Circumscription

and compromise, as the processes whereby individuals choose some paths and not others, may therefore be regarded as processes of self-definition and self-creation.

### *Circumscription*

Circumscription is “the process by which an individual eliminates unacceptable occupations from the extensive range of possible careers” (Juntunen & Even, 2012, p. 247). The process of circumscription is underpinned by five principles. The first principle contends that individuals move from a stage of concrete thought to more abstract thinking as they get older, and that they move through this process at different rates. The second principle holds that the development of self-concept and occupational preferences is closely linked. Third as individuals develop, information is absorbed according to complexity. Less complex information is absorbed at a younger age, followed by more abstract information as the individual grows older. Often while information is being absorbed, the individual is becoming aware of the existence of more complex information. The fourth principle describes the process whereby self-concepts become more clearly delineated and complex as the young person incorporates more abstract information such as that on gender and social class. Thus while the development of self-concept progresses, a narrowing of options occurs as the young person irreversibly eliminates certain occupations from their considerations, for example on the basis of social class or gender. The fifth principle claims that the development of self-concept is so subtle and gradual, that individuals are not aware of it until their awareness is heightened by an external source. This is reflected when an individual can express occupational preferences but not verbalise why they hold these preferences.

*Stages of circumscription.* The first stage in this process is orientation to size and power, which occurs from approximately age three to age five. During this stage young people become aware of the adult world, that is ‘big people’ compared with them, ‘little people’, and that work is a part of what ‘big people’ do. Thus, developing an awareness of occupations as being a part of adulthood is the main task during this stage.

The second stage is orientation to sex roles, which occurs from approximately age six to eight. During this stage individuals develop an awareness of sex roles and what is appropriate for their sex, for example clothing. This is also reflected in vocational choice where young people actively reject occupations they see as belonging to the opposite sex. Coogan and Chen (2007) claimed that L. S. Gottfredson’s theory is “instrumental in identifying how entrenched gender-role orientation can affect a woman’s views about career choices” (p. 196). During this stage they also become aware of social class and this is the beginning of distinguishing between jobs on that basis.

Stage three is orientation to social valuation, which occurs from approximately age nine to thirteen. During this time they become more aware of abstract concepts such as social class and its trappings, and more concerned about the opinions of others. They become more aware of high status and low status jobs, and begin to

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reject occupations they perceive as low status. During this stage they become aware of the link between education, occupation and income, and the occupational expectations of their parents. They also become aware of their ability. Thus their self-concept is shaped during this stage by the addition of information on social class and ability. Again circumscription occurs with young people eliminating from their zone of acceptable occupations, those occupations they see as of low prestige or too difficult for them to achieve in light of their ability. This process not only narrows occupational choice, but also forecloses on experiences that could determine whether such occupations may be appropriate to the interests and abilities of the young person (Juntenen & Even, 2012).

Stage four is orientation to the internal, unique self which occurs from approximately age fourteen on, and is often referred to as the “adolescent identity crisis” (L. S. Gottfredson, 1981, p. 549). During this stage vocational development becomes more of a conscious process (Juntenen & Even, 2012). Unlike the first three stages where the individual focused on eliminating unacceptable alternatives, this stage is concerned with weighing up the acceptable alternatives in terms of personal preference and accessibility. They also begin to view these alternatives in light of anticipated future lifestyle. It is during this stage that individuals are beginning to implement their career decisions, and becoming increasingly aware of the availability of training and education, and job vacancies.

Progression through these stages is critical to the development of self-concept, a fundamental aspect of L. S. Gottfredson’s model. Self-concept comprises many elements including those which are vocationally relevant such as “gender, social class background, intelligence, and vocational interests, competencies and values” (L. S. Gottfredson, 1981, p. 548). A significant aspect of this theory is L. S. Gottfredson’s acknowledgment of the influence of gender and social class. A criticism of L. S. Gottfredson’s theory is its limited empirical support (Juntenen & Even, 2012) although some research has been reported. In the Australian context it has been described as an excellent framework for examining young children’s career interests and understanding of the world of work (Care, Dean, & R. Brown, 2007) and in the United States context as a framework for conceptualising Latino student school failure and dropout problem (Ivers, Milsom, & Newsome, 2012).

### *Compromise*

Unlike circumscription, compromise is a process of vetting the preferred alternatives on the basis of “external reality” (L. S. Gottfredson, 1996, p. 195) or accessibility. This refers to “obstacles or opportunities in the social or economic environment that affect one’s chance of getting into a particular occupation” (L. S. Gottfredson, 1981, p. 548). For example, socioeconomic circumstances, family contacts, or geographic location may affect an individual’s occupational opportunities. In essence compromise is the process whereby individuals relinquish their most preferred alternative for those they perceive as more accessible (L. S. Gottfredson, 2002). Compromise may occur because of anticipated external barriers (anticipated compromise) or because of barriers already encountered

(experiential compromise) (L. S. Gottfredson). Minor compromise relates to choice among acceptable alternatives whereas major compromise involves choosing an unacceptable occupation. Betz (2008) simply explains compromise as seeking a balance between “desirability and accessibility” (p. 368). Essentially individuals move from preferred options that are less accessible to them towards more accessible but less preferred options (Betz, 2008).

L. S. Gottfredson (1996) proposed four principles of compromise. The first principle is the development of conditional priorities whereby “the relative importance of sex type, prestige and type of work activity depend on the severity of the compromise required” (p. 104). L. S. Gottfredson (2005) believed that in compromising, individuals would relinquish options on the basis of interests first, then social status and finally gender (Juntunen & Even, 2012). The second principle relates to individuals’ capacity to opt for the “good enough” choice and not necessarily the best choice. The third principle applies when the available choices do not satisfy individuals and they avoid committing to any choice in a process referred to as staving off the “not good enough”. The fourth principle, accommodating to compromise, is the process through which individuals accommodate even major compromise. In such cases, their satisfaction will be dependent on the degree to which they are able to implement their desired social self whether through their work or through the lifestyle it enables. L. S. Gottfredson stressed that these principles apply to only individuals beginning their adult lives and not to older adults who may feel more willing to follow their true calling. Tsousides and Jome (2008) found that compromise may contribute to discontentment and dissatisfaction and that it may dishearten individuals, both of which have implications for theory and practice. These authors concluded that further research is warranted into the emotional effects of compromise. While there is limited empirical research related to L. S. Gottfredson’s theory (Juntunen & Even, 2012), D. B. Cochran, Wang, Stephenson, Johnson and Crews (2011) concluded that it is a good working model for adolescent occupational aspirations and that it remains relevant in school counselling.

#### SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEORIES

While the theories presented in this chapter are classified as developmental theories, and as such exhibit similarities and differences, they also exhibit similarities and differences with the theories discussed in chapters 2 and 4. The discussion in this chapter will focus on similarities and differences between the theories contained in this chapter, and similarities and differences with other theory groups will be discussed in chapter 5. As discussed in chapter 2, the discussion on similarities and differences will be illustrated by [Table 3.1](#).

Whereas the theories in chapter 2 had their origins in differential psychology, the group of theories presented in this chapter have their origins predominantly in developmental psychology. As a result, these theories tend to be “more inclusive, more concerned with longitudinal expressions of behavior, and more inclined to highlight the importance of self-concept. They tend to be process-oriented in their

conceptions of how career behavior develops and changes over time” (Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 207). Interestingly these theories, in particular that of Super (1990) and Savickas (2002, 2005, 2013a) also take into account contextual influences, a trend which could reflect their later development in the history of career theory. While this discussion will examine similarities and differences related to the content influences of the individual and the context, and the process influences, it will not do so in discrete sections as the three are entwined in these theories.

The most significant content influence in this group of theories is that of self-concept. Self-concept is closely linked with the process influences, because the process of career development concerns the implementation of self-concept (Betz, 1994b). Savickas, with his emphasis on vocational personality is the only theorist who differs. More recently however, drawing on the influence of social constructionism Savickas (2013a, b) has structured his theory around self as actor, self as agent and self as author. All theorists described the self-concept being influenced by a range of variables, with the largest range of influences being acknowledged by Super (1990) in his segmental model. Savickas also acknowledges the range of multiple influences on vocational personality. However none of the theories adequately account for the nature of self-concept on career development. A significant feature of the work of Super and also of Savickas is that they are the only theorists of this group who address the issues of life roles and role salience. The process orientation of these theories is reflected in the stage models of development that they present. While there is no agreement between the theories on the number of stages, each theory presented in this chapter addresses the issue of change over time. Historically, the most significant advance in the stage models is acknowledgment that career development covers the life span, an issue which saw the demise of the theory of Ginzberg and his colleagues. However L. S. Gottfredson’s stages also only span the period from early childhood to late adolescence. An advance in thinking about stage theories is the concept of maxi- and mini-cycles and the possibility of recycling through stages first proposed by Super and attended to in the work of Savickas. A difference between the work of Super and Savickas occurs in relation to their understanding of development. Super conceived it as an internal process whereas, Savickas conceives it as an interactional process between individual and environment.

Associated with the stages are vocational development tasks which individuals master as they mature. Basically, the tasks describe the process of making finer decisions about occupations by ruling some out on the basis of new self knowledge or occupational knowledge. Super described this in his propositions 10 and 11 as a narrowing of options. However L. S. Gottfredson described the process in much more detail. Using the terms of circumscription and compromise, she outlined a process of circumscription where as young people grow older they rule out some occupations as possible options on the basis of factors such as gender and social class. She also described the process of compromise where individuals consider their possible options on the basis of the external reality, that is the employment



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Table 3.1 Influences on career development – Theories of process

	No acknowledgement	Acknowledgement		Significant emphasis	
CONTENT INFLUENCES	Ginzberg	Super	L. S. Gottfredson	Miller Tiedeman & Tiedeman	Savickas
Intrapersonal System					
– ability					
– aptitudes					
– interests					
– gender					
– age					
– skills					
– ethnicity					
– sexual orientation					
– beliefs					
– health					
– disability					
– values					
– world of work knowledge					
– personality					
– self-concept					
– physical attributes					
Social System					
– family					
– peers					
– community groups					
– education institutions					
– media					
– workplace					
Environmental-Societal System					
– political decisions					
– historical trends					
– employment market					
– geographical location					
– socioeconomic status					
– globalisation					
PROCESS INFLUENCES					
Recursiveness					
Change Over Time					
Chance					

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realities of their social or economic environment. Compromise on the basis of the individual's reality was also a feature of Ginzberg's theory in which the process variable of compromise was closely tied to the content variables of the world of work, education, and personal values. These factors, termed external reality by L. S. Gottfredson, resemble Super's situational determinants and to some extent Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman's common reality.

None of the theories claim that progress through their stages is only a forward movement. For example, Super introduced the concept of "minicycles" to indicate recycling through stages. Inherent in each of the theories is a forward momentum and what could be described as personal growth. This is reflected in Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman's concept of personal reality where individuals reach the point of being able to make their own decisions, free of the influence of others, and Super's concept of career maturity, explained in his seventh and eighth propositions as an ability to cope with life-stage demands.

A significant feature of the work of Super, Savickas and Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman, is the attention they draw to subjective processes and the affective domain of development. This is emphasised to a greater extent by Miller-Tiedeman (1988, 1999), and is significant in its capacity to empower the individual in the career counselling process. A major contribution to theory featured in the work of Savickas is the notion of life themes present in the career stories of individuals. As previously discussed, it challenges the traditional ways in which career counsellors have worked with their clients and reflects a move in the field towards narrative career counselling and the notion of life design (Savickas et al., 2009). It also challenges traditional views of decision making proposed in chapter 2 in the discussion of the matching models.

As evidenced in this discussion on similarities and differences, there is considerable overlap between the theories. The main contribution of this group of theories has been their concept of life-span career development. While development has been the focus of these theories, they also acknowledge the context in which career development takes place. However they do not sufficiently account for the influence of the contextual elements on career development. Chapter 4 will examine the group of theories which place more emphasis on contextual influences.

## **THEORIES FOCUSING ON CONTENT AND PROCESS**

Acknowledgments such as those by Holland (1985a) of the developmental nature of career and the influence of contextual influences, and by Super (1990) of 'personal determinants' and 'situational determinants' influencing the developmental process of career decision-making, represented a significant change in thinking about career development and career decision-making. These views reflect what Savickas (1995) has described as *rapprochement* in career development theory, where theorists share new ideas in refinements of their theories and acknowledge contributions of other theories. The discussion of *rapprochement* emphasised that the matching theories and the developmental theories could no longer stand alone as explanations of career development, and suggested that the key concepts of these theories will be viewed as parts of a complex interaction that cannot be viewed as objectively as the earlier theories. Although Lent (2001) lamented the lack of attention given to contextual variables in career theory, more recent theories have focused on the content of both the individual and the context, and the nature of the interaction process within and between these variables (e.g., Social Cognitive Career Theory, Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent et al., 1994). In addition, the more subtle cognitive processes which are part of career decision-making continue to receive considerable attention.

Just as the refinements of the earlier theories of Holland and Super reflected responses to these criticisms, so too are they reflected in more recent models and approaches to career development included in this chapter. These include the social learning theory of career decision-making (Krumboltz, 1979, 1994; Krumboltz & Henderson, 2002; L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, 1996), and the more recent extension *happenstance learning theory* (Krumboltz, 2009, 2011; Krumboltz & Levin, 2004; Krumboltz et al., 2013; K. E. Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999), social cognitive career theory (Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent et al., 1994; Lent & S. D. Brown, 1996, 2002; Lent et al., 1996, 2002; Lent & Hackett, 1994) and cognitive information processing models (Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 1991; Peterson, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz, 1996; Peterson, Sampson, Lenz & Reardon, 2002; Peterson, Lumsden, Sampson, Reardon & Lenz, 2002; Reardon et al., 2000; Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, & Pearson, 2009, 2011; Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004). Two additional theoretical models include the developmental-contextual approach of Vondracek et al. (1986; Vondracek & Porfeli, 2002a, b), and the more recently conceptualised contextual approach (Valach & Young, 2002, 2009; Young & Valach, 2000, 2004; Young et al., 1996, 2002, 2011, 2014; Young et al., 2014; Young et al., 2011). The work of Roe (1956; Roe & Lunneborg, 1990;

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Lunneborg, 1997) is also included in this chapter as she focused on individual and contextual variables. All of these theoretical approaches have taken into account the complex society in which we live and the many influences on career decision makers, as well as changes from place to place and time to time. Their work is representative of attempts to address the complexity of context. Although the work of L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005) is acknowledged as the first theory to systematically discuss contextual factors (D. Brown, 1996b), her work also includes developmental processes. It has therefore been discussed in chapter 3.

#### KRUMBOLTZ'S SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY OF CAREER DECISION-MAKING (SLTCDM)

The social learning theory of career decision-making proffered by Krumboltz and his colleagues was first formulated in 1976 (Krumboltz, A. M. Mitchell, & Jones, 1976). The theory and a significant restatement published by A. M. Mitchell, Jones and Krumboltz in 1979 was the first adaptation of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory to the career field. This theory was also one of the first to address both the content and process of career decision-making, although Hesketh and Rounds (1995) have commented that the theory has a stronger emphasis on process than content. This theory is an example of one which has been reconceptualised and modified over time.

The Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making (SLTCDM) aims to explain how people become employed in the wide variety of available occupations. It extends trait and factor theory in its attempt to explain the process of person-job congruence. Holland (1992) commented on the importance of learning theory in supporting the content of his typology. The theory is based on learning principles, and suggests that individuals learn about themselves, their preferences, and the world of work through direct and indirect experiences. They then take action based on this knowledge- and skills-based learning.

In particular, there are four categories of factors which influence an individual's career decision-making process: genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences and task approach skills (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990). The first category, an individual's genetic endowment and special abilities, includes gender, ethnicity, appearance, ability or disability, and other qualities. Krumboltz made it clear that certain talents, such as musical ability and muscular coordination, may only be developed if the exposure to environmental events is favourable. For example, a young girl with musical ability raised in a low income family may not be able to develop her ability because of the prohibitive costs of the musical instrument and related tuition.

Thus the second factor of influence raised in the theory is environmental conditions and events. Krumboltz (1979) listed twelve such conditions and events which may be planned or unplanned, and attributable to human action or nature. These factors are most often outside the individual's control. They include:

1. number and nature of job opportunities,
2. number and nature of training opportunities,

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3. social policies and procedures for selecting trainees and workers (for example, requirement of a high school diploma),
4. monetary and social rewards of various occupations,
5. labor laws and union rules,
6. natural disasters,
7. availability of and demand for natural resources,
8. technological developments,
9. changes in social organization (for example, welfare),
10. family training experiences and social and financial resources,
11. the educational system, and
12. neighborhood and community influences (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996, p. 238).

Learning experiences are the third category of influence. Each person is posited to have a unique pattern of learning experiences which result in a career (and life) path. These learning experiences are divided into two types, instrumental and associative. Instrumental, or direct, learning experiences are those in which the individual acts on the environment to produce a positive response (based on operant conditioning). Thus Krumboltz (1979; L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996) discussed a process whereby antecedents, that is the special characteristics and genetic endowments, the environmental conditions, and the characteristics of a particular task, interact in an overt or covert way with the individual who responds and receives consequences (positive or negative) from the environment. For example, an individual learns from an early age that they are physically nimble or clumsy, or that they have a sense of humour. These personal characteristics are responded to positively or negatively. It is through experiences over time with relevant personal characteristics that an individual learns skills relevant to decision making about careers which they view as appropriate to them.

The term associative learning experiences, based on a classical conditioning model, refers to the development of positive and negative attitudes and beliefs about occupations through a broad array of external stimuli. For example, children may learn positive messages about sporting heroes and negative messages about politicians. The association of these messages with occupation produces a positive or negative response in the individual which will be relevant in career decision-making.

Finally, the fourth influence, task approach skills, results from an interaction of the first three influences. They include performance standards, work habits, perceptual and cognitive processes, mental sets, and emotional responses. As a result of the interaction of the four influences, four outcomes can be described, with the second of these representing a later addition to the theory (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). The first outcome is self-observation generalisations, or beliefs about the self, used to describe an individual's own reality. They are the generalisations individuals make about themselves as a result of feedback over time. For example, an individual may state that they are good at making people laugh, but may not remember all the specific incidents which lead them to this conclusion.

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A second outcome is world-view generalisations, where people observe the environment and trends, and draw conclusions about how things are, and how they might be in the future. These observations may be accurate or inaccurate, and, like self-observation generalisations, may have derived from positive and negative learning experiences.

A third outcome, also discussed previously as an influence, is task approach skills. L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) defined task approach skills as “cognitive and performance abilities and emotional predispositions for coping with the environment, interpreting it in relation to self-observation generalizations, and making covert and overt predictions about future events” (p. 246). An individual examines their generalisations about themselves and the world of work, and formulates specific skills to act in relation to career decision making. Finally, the fourth outcome is action. These behaviours include engaging in activities which lead to career entry, for example enrolling in an appropriate training program and actively applying for jobs.

A number of testable hypotheses have been proffered by Krumboltz and his colleagues. These include that people will prefer an occupation (a) if they have succeeded at tasks which they believe are similar to those relevant to certain occupations; (b) if they have observed an important model being reinforced for tasks similar to those performed by members of that occupation; and (c) if they have experienced positive associations with the occupation through direct or indirect messages (Krumboltz, 1994).

Social learning theory is significant to the development of career theory for its recognition of the importance of a wide range of influences on career choice rather than focusing on a single influence. L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990) acknowledged the importance of context in the social learning approach to career decision making. “The social learning theory of career decision making suggests that maximum career development of all individuals requires each individual to have the opportunity to be exposed to the widest array of learning experiences, regardless of race, gender or ethnic origin” (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, pp. 167-168). Thus they acknowledged the influence on career choice of the interaction between many contextual elements. The third outcome, task approach skills, is also suggestive of an interaction between the individual and the environment, although the nature and process of this interaction is not fully explained.

Along with a number of colleagues, Krumboltz attempted to reformulate the SLTCDM because “as the world changes, so do our models” (Krumboltz & Henderson, 2002, p. 52). With Nichols, he attempted to integrate principles of the Living Systems Framework (D. Ford, 1987) with learning theory (Krumboltz & Nichols, 1990; described further in chapter 7).

Most recently, Krumboltz and his colleagues extended his theory to include an extensive discussion of the role of chance, or happenstance, in career development (K. E. Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). The value of this work is seen not only in advancing the theory of career behaviour, but also in looking at application of theory to practice. Extending on the concept of birth as a chance event, K. E.

Mitchell et al. (p. 16) pointed out that “Humans are born with different characteristics and predispositions at a given time and place to parents not of their choosing. They grow up in an environment where innumerable unpredictable events occur that provide opportunities for learning both of a positive and negative nature. Individuals do not plan any of these circumstances nor do they control the learning experiences that are open to them”. This argument is supported by Roberts and Parsell (1992) whose work (discussed also in chapter 6) analysed the career development of young adults in four separate geographical locations over the three years. The evidence reported in this sociological study showed “social class origins ... were the best predictors of the samples’ long term career trajectories” (p. 726). “Young people from middle-class homes were twice as likely as those from working class homes to experience continued success” (p. 741). The theory of planned happenstance would suggest these young people were affected by the chance opportunity of where and to whom they were born, acknowledging that the availability of various learning experiences and therefore the development of task approach skills is often determined by our life’s circumstances, for example, race, colour, gender, geographical location, financial and social status, and physical attributes.

L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz concentrated on the availability of learning experiences when revising their work and produced the learning theory of career counselling (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). Their previous theoretical formulation provided explanations for a person’s career behaviour, however in attempting to link theory to practice, they were interested in helping people shape their own career paths. The issues of importance in this development from the original SLTCDM were based on encouraging people to go beyond their learned experiences with career decision-making, and to expand their capabilities and interests by investigating areas in which they had no previous experience. Clients were also encouraged to prepare themselves for changing work tasks rather than assume the world of work would always stay the same (p. 250). Krumboltz saw that individuals are exposed to different and limited learning experiences that result in self-observation generalisations and therefore task approach skills being developed from a small set compared to those that could be developed if there were unlimited opportunities. The impact on career counselling theory of L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz’s learning theory of career counselling is the change of thinking on client indecision and congruence. L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz suggested a reframe of the descriptor indecisive to open minded and proposed this as perhaps the most sensible policy for many clients who can then experiment with options rather than be locked in to their one decision. Person and environment fit is another concept these authors suggested was no longer valid. Due to the changing nature of the world of work and the lifelong learning individuals constantly engage in, trying to match a person to a work environment is like “trying to hit a butterfly with a boomerang” (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996, p.265). This concept of open mindedness was moving away from the classic reasoned thought of career choice and paving the way for planned happenstance theory.

Planned happenstance as a notion is well supported by other theorists, albeit using differing terminology, such as Watts (1996c) who referred to “planful serendipity” (p. 46), Gelatt (1989) who spoke of “positive uncertainty” (p. 252), Bright, Pryor, Wilksfield and Earl (2005) who spoke of serendipitous events, and Patton and McMahon who included chance in their Systems Theory Framework (1999, 2006a). Other authors (e.g., Bandura, 1982; Betsworth & J. C. Hansen, 1996; Bright, Pryor, & Harpham, 2005; Cabral & Salomone, 1990; M. J. Miller, 1983; Pryor & Bright, 2011; Scott & Hatalla, 1990; Williams, Soeprato, Like, Touradji, Hess, & Hill, 1998) acknowledged chance events as being present in career exploration but also acknowledged the difficulty in its incorporation in career counselling theory or practice. Perhaps this explains the paucity of empirical studies on chance in career decision-making. Researching testable propositions would add to the acceptance of happenstance as part of career theory.

Happenstance theory may be seen as an amendment to Krumboltz’s learning theory of career counselling (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996) which was originally derived from Krumboltz’s social learning theory of career decision-making (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990). Indeed in the presentation by Krumboltz and Henderson (2002) components from all three iterations of the theory are presented. In understanding the theory of planned happenstance in relation to career behaviour it is impossible to view it in isolation. The entire body of work contributed by Krumboltz and his colleagues to career development theory is what makes sense of planned happenstance. The social learning theory of career decision-making and the learning theory of career counselling provide the underpinning groundwork for planned happenstance with the recurrent themes of chance happening in life from the moment of birth and continuing in an expected pattern of unexpectedness. The importance of this theory is its practical application and the skills base delineated to assist clients in determining their own satisfying lives.

In 2009, Krumboltz advanced his work to refer to it as Happenstance Learning Theory (HLT). HLT is based on 4 propositions – the first that “the goal of career counseling is to help clients learn to take actions to achieve more satisfying career and personal lives – not to make a single career decision” (p. 135). Krumboltz et al. (2013) noted that this is even more important in times of rapid workplace change and uncertainty. The second proposition of Krumboltz (2009) emphasises that assessments be used to foster learning and not for the purposes of matching. The third proposition focuses on the importance of individuals continuing to position themselves – to be active agents – such that they not only are well positioned to respond to unplanned events but that they may “generate beneficial unplanned events” (Krumboltz, 2009, p. 144). The final proposition emphasises that the focus of counselling needs to be on what the client does outside the session. Krumboltz (2011) applies the HLT to counselling and provides a guide for counsellors. In addition to also providing practical applications of HLT, Krumboltz et al. provide evidence of research studies which support the utility of HLT in enhancing career development of individuals.



## SOCIAL COGNITIVE CAREER THEORY

The development of cognitive models of vocational psychology reflects what F. H. Borgen (1991) has termed “the cognitive revolution” (p. 279). The cognitive revolution has been instrumental in strengthening the view of individuals as possessing personal agency, as being active agents in their own development. This view is in contrast to the determinism of psychoanalytic perspectives and the view of humans as malleable proposed by behaviourist approaches. At the same time, we cannot ignore that there are internal and external factors which are barriers to positive change and growth. For example, Krumboltz spoke of genetic endowments which may be negative or positive factors in an individual’s career planning. Similarly, changing social and economic conditions can have a marked effect on career development. “In short, a complex array of factors – such as culture, gender, genetic endowment, sociostructural considerations, and disability/health status – operate in tandem with people’s cognitions, affecting the nature and range of their career possibilities” (Lent et al., 1996, p. 374). Hackett (1995) asserted that the role of sociocognitive mechanisms, especially self-efficacy, in career choice and development is strongly supported in the research literature, a view further supported in reviews by Betz (2000, 2007) and Betz and Hackett (1997). In addition to its role in career choice and career decision making, self-efficacy has a role in the development of interests, values and goals. Hartung (2010) cited self-efficacy as one of the most widely studied constructs in the vocational psychology literature.

In response to this cognitive revolution, and as an attempt to contribute to the trend toward theoretical convergence in career psychology, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) was developed (Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent & S. D. Brown, 1996, 2002; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002; Lent & Hackett, 1994). Lent (2005) acknowledged the SCCT as a “fairly recent approach to understanding the career puzzle” (p. 101), a position reiterated in 2013. In being developed as a “unifying framework for bringing together common pieces, or elements, identified by previous career theorists” (Lent, p. 101) its aim is to develop constructs and concepts to bridge differences and incomplete conceptualisations in existing theory. This aim was heralded following a major review of the current state of career development theory (Hackett & Lent, 1992), when the authors commented that “The time may be ripe for beginning to construct integrative theories that (a) bring together conceptually related constructs (e.g., self-concept, self-efficacy); (b) more fully explain outcomes that are common to a number of career theories (e.g., satisfaction, stability); and (c) account for the relations among seemingly diverse constructs (e.g., self-efficacy, interests, abilities, needs)” (p. 443). Chapter 7 discusses the contribution of SCCT to convergence; aspects of the theory itself are presented in this chapter.

The SCCT was derived primarily from Bandura’s (1986) revised social cognitive theory. It has also been informed by the self-efficacy theory of Hackett and Betz (1981; see chapter 6), and the learning theory of Krumboltz (1979, 1994) discussed previously. It aims to update each of these theoretical formulations with

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changes derived from the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986, 1997). For example, the developers of SCCT acknowledged the importance of learning experiences, and the influence of genetic factors and environmental conditions on career decisions. However, they emphasised that social cognitive theory extends beyond the narrow behavioural bases of the learning theory principles of learning and conditioning. Rather, SCCT focuses more on the specific cognitive mediators which influence learning experiences in career decision-making behaviour. In addition, the theory focuses on how interests, abilities and other relevant variables interrelate, and the specific manner in which personal and environmental factors influence career decisions. Social cognitive theory also emphasises that the individual is an active agent in these processes. Lent (2013) also discusses similarities and differences between SCCT and trait-factor and developmental career theories, noting that “SCCT tends to be less concerned with the specifics of ages and stages, yet more concerned with theoretical elements that may promote or hinder career behaviour across developmental tasks and periods” (p. 117).

SCCT focuses on three interlocking segmental processes: how career and academic interests develop; how career choices are made and enacted; and how performance outcomes are achieved. It seeks to explain a bidirectional relationship between variables using Bandura’s (1986) concept of a triadic reciprocal model of causality. Using this model, the authors described how three intricately related social cognitive variables (self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals), interact with aspects of the individual such as gender and ethnicity, their relevant environmental issues, and their learning experiences. Importantly, the individual is central to the three interlocking processes.

According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy refers to an individual’s beliefs about their capacity to “organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (p. 391). Social cognitive theory suggests that self-efficacy is not a static unitary trait, but rather is seen as a constantly changing set of self-beliefs which are peculiar to given performance areas and which interact with other personal, behavioural, and environmental factors (Hackett & Lent, 1992). Outcome expectations refer to beliefs about the probable consequences of a particular course of action. Similar to self-efficacy beliefs, they are also derived through various learning experiences. The final social cognitive variable, personal goals, refers to the determination to undertake a certain activity to produce a particular outcome. By establishing goals, individuals are able to coordinate, direct and maintain their own behaviour, and thereby be agentic in their behaviour. Lent and Hackett (1994) suggested then that these three social cognitive variables (self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals) interact in a dynamically reciprocal way in the self-regulation and maintenance of an individual’s behaviour. In particular, they focused on the development of interests, career choice, and career-related performance. In 2006, Lent and S. D. Brown added a new SCCT model to focus on educational and work satisfaction.

*Interests*

In relation to interests, SCCT suggests that self-efficacy and outcome expectations regarding activities and tasks influence career interests. That is, individuals form an enduring interest in an activity when they believe they are good at it, and when they believe that performing it will produce an outcome that is valued. In turn, ongoing interest, and positive self-efficacy and outcome expectations will promote goals which encourage an individual to continue to engage in the activity. An ongoing positive feedback loop will be maintained by positive experiences or revised with failures. The theory developers posited that “this process repeats itself continuously throughout the lifespan, although it is perhaps most fluid up until late adolescence or early adulthood, at which point interests tend to stabilize” (Lent & S. D. Brown, 1996, p. 314). These authors acknowledged, however, that new experiences, and factors such as new technology, will continue to stimulate interests.

In relation to aptitudes (abilities) and values, Lent et al. (1994) suggested that while they are important in the development of interests, they are mediated by self-efficacy and outcome expectations. For example, an individual may be good at public speaking, however they must believe they are and also believe that public speaking is worthwhile for it to be developed as an interest. SCCT conceptualises work values within outcome expectations, that is they are related to preferences for particular work conditions and perceived reward (e.g., status or money), and the extent to which they believe they are part of particular occupations.

Importantly, this theory emphasises the relevance of other person and contextual variables, such as gender, race and ethnicity, genetic endowment, and socioeconomic status, as Lent stated “self-efficacy and outcome expectations do not arise in a social vacuum” (p. 107). SCCT views gender and race as socially constructed and emphasises their relevance to how they are viewed in the sociocultural environment, and their relationship to opportunity structure. “Framing gender and ethnicity as socially constructed aspects of experience leads naturally to a consideration of sociostructural conditions and processes that mould the learning opportunities to which particular individuals are exposed, the characteristic reactions they receive for performing different activities, and the future outcomes they anticipate” (Lent & S. D. Brown, 1996, p. 315). Thus the effect of gender and ethnicity on career interests, choice and performance is also posited to operate through self-efficacy and outcome expectations.

*Career Choice*

SCCT proposes that career choice is a function of interests orienting people toward activities which support them. This equation requires a supportive environmental background. However, the literature on job satisfaction suggests that individuals' career choices do not always reflect interests, and that environmental conditions are not always supportive (see chapter 5, in particular the discussion of the null hypothesis, Betz, 1989). In attempting to be an integrative model, SCCT highlights

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a range of factors which mediate between interests and career choice. These include self-efficacy and outcome expectations as discussed, in addition to a large array of contextual influences. Although contextual influences can be positive or negative, SCCT emphasises that an individual's formulated goals afford a measure of personal agency. SCCT (Lent et al., 1994, 1996) draws on the conceptualisations of the environmental context of Astin (1984) and Vondracek et al. (1986), opportunity structure (discussed further in chapter 6), and contextual affordance (discussed later in this chapter) respectively. SCCT further develops these constructs which are influential in an individual's career development by dividing them into two types:

1. more distal influences (such as opportunities for skill development, culture and gender-role socialization processes, one's range of potential academic/career role models) that help shape social cognitions and interests; and
2. proximal influences (for instance, emotional and financial support for selecting a particular option, job availability in one's preferred field, sociostructural barriers) that come into play at critical choice junctures (Lent et al., 1996, p. 393).

Each of these constructs refers to the differential way in which the environment supports or fails to support an individual's career development processes, thus as discussed, each can be viewed as being positive or negative. As Lent (2005) affirmed, "Circumstances and cultural conditions sometimes require a compromise in personal interests. In such instances, choices are determined by what options are available to the individual, the nature of his or her self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations, and the sorts of messages the individual receives from his or her support system" (p. 110).

### *Career-related Performance*

SCCT is also concerned with work task performance and perseverance at a work activity or career (job stability). Again, an interaction between ability and the social cognitive variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals is crucial. Consistent with the triadic-reciprocal approach which emphasises bidirectional interaction between influences, a feedback loop between performance attainment and further behaviour is posited. Therefore, mastery of a certain task or tasks will further develop abilities, and in turn self-efficacy and outcome expectations. The development and revision of personal goals is a further element in this loop. [Figure 4.1](#) presents the diagrammatic framework of this theoretical approach.

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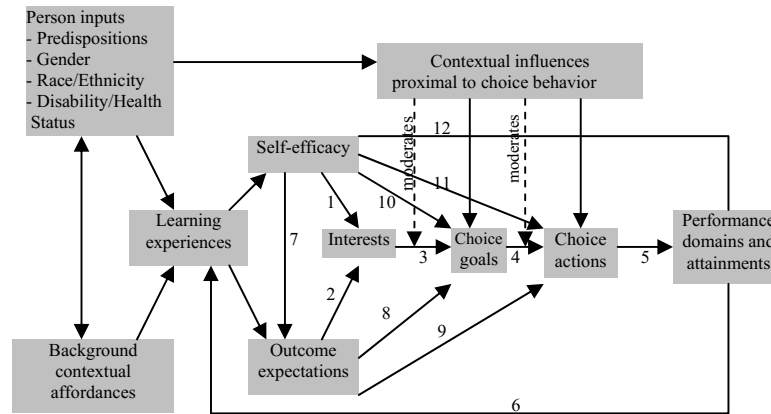


Figure 4.1 Person, contextual, and experiential factors affecting career-related choice behavior (Reprinted with permission from R.W., Lent, S.D. Brown and G. Hackett, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, monograph 45(1) page 93. Copyright 1993 Lent, S. D. Brown & Hackett)

While SCCT is a relatively new development, Lent's comprehensive reviews (2005 and 2013) have highlighted the extensive empirical work conducted to explore and validate SCCT's central variables and propositions. It stands as a valuable additional theoretical model designed to explain individual variability in career interests, choice and performance. It is a particularly important theoretical framework because it embraces a constructivist view of the individual as an active shaper of his or her life, within the constraints of personal and environmental or contextual factors. Further, the social cognitive variables offer key explanatory mechanisms which are missing from other theoretical models. More recently, Betz (2008) affirmed the research support for the SCCT, in particularly self-efficacy expectations. Research has also generally affirmed the theory's major hypotheses, and in particular has provided support for its applicability to diverse groups (Betz). Subsequent annual reviews of practice and research in career counselling and development (Bikos, Dykhous, Boutin, Gowen, & Rodney, 2013; Creager, 2011; Erford & Crockett, 2012; Hartung, 2010; Patton & McIlveen, 2009) have affirmed the abundant research base for SCCT, lending support to its growing dominance in the career development theory and practice literature. Lent and S. D. Brown have extended the applicability of the sociocognitive view to work satisfaction (2006) and to subjective well being in the work context (2008).

## COGNITIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING MODEL

The cognitive information processing approach (CIP; Peterson, Lumsden, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz, 2002; Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 1991; Peterson,

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Sampson, Lenz, & Reardon, 2002; Peterson, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz, 1996; Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, & Peterson, 2000, 2009, 2011; Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004) aims to present a guide for “the actual thought and memory processes involved in solving career problems and making career decisions” (Peterson et al., 2002, p. 315). CIP is based on cognitive processing theory, and reflects the importance of cognition processes in developing career theories.

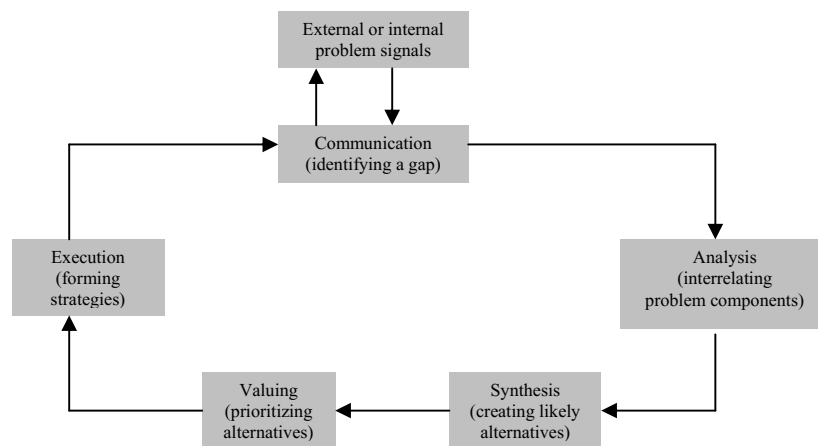
The model first outlined in Peterson et al. (1991, 1996) is based on the three key factors in making career choices identified by Parsons (1909), which are viewed as three distinct lines of inquiry in the model. These are self-knowledge, occupational knowledge, and career decision-making. The aim of the model is to assist individuals to become better problem solvers and decision makers, therefore it has a strong practice orientation, a notion reiterated by D. Brown (1996b). Reardon et al. (2011) further reiterated this aspect of the CIP model, “The aim of CIP theory is to help individuals make informed and careful career and life choices, while learning improved problem-solving and decision-making skills that can be used for future choices. In this regard CIP provides a practical example of a theoretical perspective and is appropriate for citizens who are functioning in a dynamic and global marketplace that presents numerous career problem-solving and decision-making challenges over the lifespan” (p. 241).

Peterson et al. (1996) conceptualised the model as “ever broadening concentric circles from the smallest inner circle, which is the career problem, to the largest encompassing outer circle, which is lifestyle, with each succeeding concept encompassing the previous concept” (p. 427). Within these two inner and outer circles, a number of definitions key to this paradigm are described. These include career problem solving, career decision making, and career development. The capability which underpins career and lifestyle adjustment is then the ability to recognise a problem, define it, solve it and act on it.

In outlining the nature of career problems and career problem solving, Peterson et al. (1996) emphasised that they are not always structured and that problem solving involves cognitive as well as emotional processes. The developers of the CIP model depict the hierarchically organised information processing domains as a pyramid. Two knowledge domains, self knowledge and occupational knowledge, lie at the base. The authors also emphasised the need for what they termed mid-level information processing skills, which they view as a cycle, and which are known by the acronym CASVE. These skills, which come into play in response to internal or external problem signals, include Communication (identifying a gap), Analysis (relating problem components), Synthesis (creating alternatives), Valuing (prioritising these alternatives), and Execution (forming strategies). Peterson et al. (1996) suggested that these skills are generic, that is, relevant to a range of life problems in addition to career problems.

Finally, these authors posited the importance of higher order cognitive functions, or metacognitions which comprise the executive processing domain at the apex of the pyramid. These metacognitions, described as “thinking about thinking” (Peterson, Lumsden, et al., 2002, p. 104) serve to “monitor, guide, and

regulate lower order functions ..., namely the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information, as well as the execution of cognitive strategies to solve a problem” (Peterson et al., 1996, p. 437). The principal metacognitions include self-talk, self-awareness, and monitoring and control. In formulating these concepts for practical application, Sampson et al. (1992) developed a guide to good decision making (see [Figure 4.2](#)). They further described the need to determine a client’s decidedness before determining where in the CASVE cycle an intervention needs to be carried out. For example, an undecided individual may need to experience an intervention that incorporates all phases of the cycle, whereas an individual who is decided and ready to focus on implementation may only need to focus on the execution phase of the cycle.



*Figure 4.2 The five stages of the CASVE cycle of information-processing skills used in career decision-making (From Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 1991)*

Acknowledged strengths of the model (Peterson et al., 1991, 1996) include its derivation from an existing theoretical base, its relationship to existing theoretical constructs, and its ready translation to counselling and programmatic interventions. In addition a recent description of the CIP framework (Peterson, Sampson, et al., 2002) offered detailed discussion of cultural considerations of the model and its usefulness in application to diverse populations (see also chapter 6). More recently, Reardon et al. (2011) emphasised the theory based interventions and applications of the CIP model that have been investigated for over two decades, a record that has been chronicled in a 20 page bibliography (Sampson et al., 2010). Other researchers have applied CIP to a broader cohort base (Clemens & Milsom, 2008) and have broadened its constructs to seek relationships with other constructs such as thoughts and beliefs (Paivandy, Bullock, Reardon, & Kelly, 2008).

## DEVELOPMENTAL-CONTEXTUAL APPROACH

Vondracek, Lerner and Schulenberg (1986) were also critical of the adherence of theorists to stage explanations of career development and the assumptions that these stages are ubiquitous, linear, invariant and universal. They asserted that attempting to interpret contemporary career development through a normative framework is out of step with new understandings of the complexity of the process of development and change. Instead, the developmental-contextual approach emphasises variability at both the individual and contextual level in a process termed probabilistic epigenesis. As a result, traditional normative prescriptions of career development are viewed as futile. One of the basic tenets of the developmental-contextual view is that “people, by interacting with their changing context, provide a basis of their own development” (p. 77), that is, a focus on individual development needs to be the key element of discussing career development. The individual’s construction of career *is* their career.

Based on the work of Lerner (1979), Vondracek et al. (1986) also attempted to address some of the concerns about the failure of career theory to take into account the dynamic nature of the interaction between individuals and their ever changing contexts. These authors merged the developmental organic perspective with the environmental perspective to produce developmental-contextualism. They asserted that there has been an overemphasis on within person factors such as values, abilities, and interests in career choice at the expense of contextual issues, such as family of origin issues, labour market changes, and organisational constraints. The developmental-contextual framework attempted to account for the manner in which the environment differentially inhibits or encourages an individual’s capacities to capitalise on personal characteristics and translate them into career futures, a concept referred to by Vondracek et al. as contextual affordance. In addition, Vondracek et al. (1986) asserted that traditional career theories fail to consider the active purposeful interaction of individuals with their changing contexts. Their “developmental life-span view leads to the idea that people, by interacting with their changing context, provide a basis of their own development” (p. 77), thereby emphasising the personal agency of individuals.

The developmental-contextual model was designed as a general conceptual framework, a metatheoretical framework, not as a specific career development theory. It is therefore not specific in delineating processes or hypotheses, although it has been useful in guiding a broader understanding of factors relevant to career development. The dynamic interaction model of career development proposes an outer circle of eight contextual variables (e.g., social policy, education, organisational/ institutional context), and four inner circles which illustrate the interactive roles of family of origin and family of procreation, and the adult and child extrafamilial networks. These networks (or sites for them) include peers, part-time work, and school for children and adolescents, and work and interpersonal relations for adults. The model illustrates the interaction within the inner networks, and between these and the outer contexts. This model has been reproduced in [Figure 4.3](#).



## THEORIES FOCUSING ON CONTENT AND PROCESS

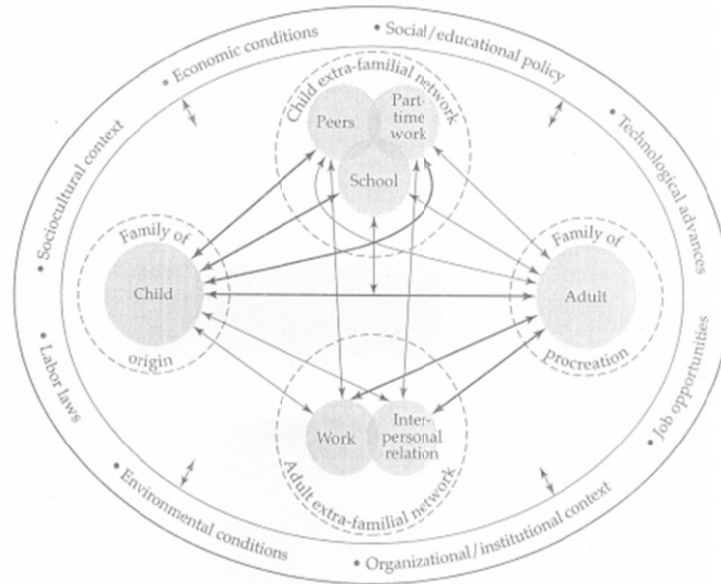


Figure 4.3 A dynamic interactional model of career development.  
(Adapted from Lerner, 1984; reprinted with permission)

Vondracek et al. (1983) identified the three key elements in career development as the individual, the context and the relationship between the two. Thus career decisions need to be viewed in light of the interaction of these factors. Basically this approach means that as the individual changes and as the contextual influences change, so too will the decision. This approach highlights the dynamic nature of career development, that is, decisions change over time as the interaction of the contextual elements change. From this, time and the evolutionary nature of career development are highlighted as important components of the process. It is particularly important to understand in this discussion the notion of dynamic interaction, where the individual is seen as an active organism operating in and acting on a constantly changing environment. While the environment engenders change in the individual, so too is the context facilitated or constrained by the individual's unique characteristics. The continuous interplay of person and context is the basis of the development of an individual's unique career construction.

In addition to dynamic interaction, an important concept crucial to the developmental-contextual model is embeddedness. Derived from life-span developmental psychology, embeddedness emphasises multiple levels at which life exists (e.g., biological, psychological, social, dyadic, community, cultural), and that at any one time, variables from any one, any combination, or all of these levels can be operating in an individual's functioning. According to this principle, change

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in any level can engender change in another level. This assumption has implications for intervention, that is intervening at one level of analysis can produce a change at another level. For example, a change in an aspect of biology (e.g., ill health), may contribute to a change at the psychological level (e.g., reduced self-efficacy). Additional changes in other levels will inevitably follow.

Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) noted that an individual's contexts are defined by physical, social and temporal parameters. "Relevant context include the full complement of context described by Bronfenbrenner (1979) in his ecology of human development and range from the proximal context of the family of origin to the macro-contexts of the labour market and global economic conditions" (p. 220). The developmental-contextual perspective also involves a temporal component, as features of the individual and of the environment change over time. The emphasis of this change is not related to normative stages, but to individual change, and individual responses to contextual change.

In line with other theorists who have conducted refinements of their work, Vondracek and Kawasaki (1995) attempted to address the limitations of the initial developmental-contextual model, in particular the lack of detail about the underlying processes in career behaviour. In order to expand on this earlier theoretical formulation, they proposed a framework that "not only incorporates the defining features of developmental-contextualism but also guides scientists toward understanding the processes underlying career decisions and pathways, the how and why of the behaviours that determine the work lives of individuals" (p. 118). They drew on the recent theoretical advances of developmental systems theory (DST; D. Ford & Lerner, 1992), and motivational systems theory (MST; M. Ford, 1992), which in turn are based on the work in the Living Systems Framework (LSF) developed by Ford and Ford (1987). Vondracek and Kawasaki suggested that the LSF adds to developmental-contextualism by providing explicit details about "the specific nature of individuals and the processes by which they function and change" (1995, p. 118).

Following the Living Systems Framework, Developmental Systems Theory posits the following account for the organised dynamics of human development:

1. the unitary functioning of the whole person-in-context; 2. the functioning of the component parts of the person; and 3. stability and change in the functioning of the component parts of the person and the person-as-a-whole. (M. Ford, 1992, p. 20)

Therefore the approach integrates nomothetic knowledge (e.g., knowledge about stages of career development) with idiographic knowledge (e.g., information about the unique characteristics of each individual).

In combining Developmental Systems Theory and Motivational Systems Theory with developmental-contextualism, Vondracek and Kawasaki (1995) integrated aspects of individuals, with processes of human functioning and with motivation or "effective person-in-context functioning" (M. Ford, 1992, p. 66) with a particular focus on adult career development. They also focused on appropriate interventions, specifically drawing on seventeen principles for motivating humans derived from

Motivational Systems Theory. Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) have commented that Developmental Systems Theory is a significant advancement over the developmental-contextual perspective:

Because it includes an operational model that addresses the content, organisation, and dynamics of the developing person. The model casts human functioning into four classes: (a) transactional functions that serve to exchange information and energy with the environment, (b) arousal functions that fuel behaviour and cognition, (c) governing functions that are responsible for behavioural and cognitive coordination and control, and d) biological functions that sustain, promote, or inhibit behavioural and cognitive functioning. (p. 213)

The person in context is the unit of interest in this model.

The developmental-contextual model was one of the first approaches to effectively integrate person and context factors in career development theory. It is also important because it firmly placed career development within the field of human development (Vondracek & Fouad, 1994), thereby encouraging the use of a multidisciplinary approach. A range of research undertakings have been guided by this framework (e.g., Reitzle & Vondracek, 2000; Vondracek, 2007; Vondracek et al., 1999).

While the developmental-contextual approach is derived directly from the field of human development, it does not focus directly on groups which traditionally have been neglected in the literature. Vondracek and Fouad (1994) maintained that because the developmental-contextual model can account for changing socioeconomic and cultural influences on career development, then it eliminates the need for different theories for different groups. This view is disputed by many authors (see in particular chapter 6).

It is clear, however, that the ongoing interaction of person and context over the lifespan is an important development in career theory. Vondracek and Kawasaki (1995) concurred that the developmental-contextual approach remains incomplete, although its comprehensiveness and lifespan focus have provided important constructs for theory integration. The key constructs of embeddedness and dynamic interaction, and the lifespan orientation of the model, suggest important possibilities for interventions and therefore reflect the potential for integration between theory and practice. Vondracek and Porfeli (2002a, b) lamented the lack of impact of the developmental-contextual approach on career theory and proposed an update based on the advances in life-span developmental theory (Baltes, 1997; Baltes et al., 1998). In particular, Vondracek and Porfeli (2002b) proposed that “career development theory ... could be a natural area in which the predominantly function-centred approach of life-span psychology can be integrated with the person-centred methodologies and theoretical perspectives exemplified by the life course approach in sociology” (p. 386). Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) affirmed the ongoing problem for developmental science in identifying “how individuals regulate their complex relationships with the multiple historical, current and anticipated contexts that affect them” (p. 220). These authors identify the work of

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Baltes' (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Baltes et al., 1998) Selection, Optimisation, and Compensation (SOC) model as potentially effective in understanding the how the processes of person-context relations occur.

Hartung, Porfeli and Vondracek (2005) proposed that an integration using life-span theory would also enhance the isolation of career theory's focus on particular age groups. This work has been expanded by Patton and Porfeli (2007) who integrated a focus on children's and adolescents' career development with career exploration through focusing specifically on major relevant contexts for intentional career exploration with this age group. Developmental-contextualism was also proposed as one of six potential unifying frameworks for career theories (Savickas, 1995), and the integrative approach suggested by Vondracek and Porfeli offers a compelling integration to address the challenging task of explaining career behaviour in a dynamic and rapidly changing world. Porfeli and Vondracek (2007) proposed a theoretical model of value system development with a focus on the relationships between work values and adolescent work experience. These authors proposed their theoretical model as grounded in developmental contextual theory, living system theory, and developmental systems theory. These age related and integrative aspects of this framework will be discussed further in chapters 6 and 7 respectively.

#### ROE'S THEORY OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER CHOICE

Although not traditionally viewed as a process and content theory, we have classified the work of Roe (1956; Roe & Lunneborg, 1990) in this category because it focused on the interaction of person (needs) and context (the family) variables. While Roe has always been outside the mainstream of counselling psychology (Roe & Lunneborg, 1990, p. 101), her ideas have stimulated discussion and research in career theory, so much so that a special issue of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* was devoted to her theory (Tinsley, 1997). Her work is also noteworthy as it was first developed within the era of trait and factor theory, yet it clearly included a focus on contextual variables.

Much of her work focused on possible relationships between occupational behaviour and personality (Roe & Lunneborg, 1990). One of her major achievements was the development of an occupational classification system based on the intensity and nature of the interpersonal relationships in occupations, acknowledged by Tinsley (1997) as a forerunner to the RIASEC model of Holland. Roe identified eight occupational groups, specifically service, business contact, organisation, technology, outdoor, science, general culture, and arts and entertainment. Within these groups she identified six levels of responsibilities, specifically professional and managerial (level 1), professional and managerial (level 2), semiprofessional and small business, skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled.

Another important focus of her work was on the development of interests and needs, for which she advanced five propositions (Roe & Lunneborg, 1990). She proposed that genetic inheritance influenced the development of personal characteristics, but that it influenced some characteristics more than others. In

addition to genetics, the individual's life experience such as cultural background, socioeconomic situation and gender also affect the development of personal characteristics.

Roe particularly focused on the relationship between parent and child, and how the child's needs were met, and claimed that the modes and degrees of need satisfaction determine which needs will become the strongest motivators. As such, types of childhood environments were predictors of person or nonperson oriented occupations, again acknowledged as a precursor to the dimension of person/thing in interests (Tinsley, 1997). For example, needs for which minimum satisfaction has been achieved may become a dominant motivator. In reviewing research into her propositions, Roe acknowledged the lack of a "direct link between parent-child relations and occupational choice" (Roe & Lunneborg, 1990, p. 81), although there was some evidence that in highly narrow fields of interest, the primary work activities chosen by individuals do relate to experiences of early childhood. However, in reviewing Roe's original work, M. T. Brown, Lum and Voyle (1997) commented that Roe posited an indirect relationship between child rearing experiences and later career behaviour, a relationship which would be mediated by the structure of psychological needs.

Another valuable contribution from Roe was the formula for occupational choice in which she examined the relative importance of many variables and how their interactions may change with time. In particular, she considered gender, the state of the economy, family background, learning and education, special acquired skills, physical attributes and impairments, chance, friends and peer group, marital situation, cognitive abilities, temperament and personality, and interests and values (Lunneborg, 1997). Roe distinguished between these variables according to the degree of control the individual has over them. She also attempted to acknowledge the nature of interactions between some of the variables. She assigned weights to the variables, and used her formula to show "probable age-related differences" (Roe & Lunneborg, 1990, p. 90) within the categories of Super's (1980) stages, thereby contributing to a developmental understanding of career choice. What is significant about this aspect of her theory is her acknowledgment of many contextual variables in career development and the changes in their relative importance over time. While her work has little empirical support, such thinking placed her ahead of her time and challenged the research and thinking of others. Indeed the re-examination of her work described by M. T. Brown et al. (1997) emphasised that her contribution to career theory was particularly significant, more so as many of her conceptualisations became precursors to other theory building, for example the RIASEC model (Holland, 1997), the data versus ideas distinction in interests and personality, and her position that people's needs structures are related to their vocational choice behaviours, a concept developed further in work adjustment theory (Dawis, 1997). Indeed Dawis suggested that Roe's work "can be productively incorporated into the Theory of Work Adjustment" (p. 295).

While Roe and Lunneborg (1990) commented that the theory is inadequate in accounting for the career development of women and minorities, these issues are considered in the formula discussed above. These authors also emphasised the

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contribution of the work of Roe to interest assessment, career counselling practice, and career development. Over two decades ago, there was some debate about whether continuing to explore the theory was warranted (M. T. Brown et al., 1997; Dawis, 1997; Lunneborg, 1997; Osipow, 1997), and to date, there is little evidence that any further exploration has occurred. However Roe's theoretical contribution to the development of our understanding of career development remains unquestioned.

### A CONTEXTUALIST ACTION THEORY EXPLANATION OF CAREER

The contextualist approach to career, with action theory used as a means of integrating aspects of contextualism has become an established part of the career theory literature (Valach & Young, 2002; Young & Valach, 2000, 2004; Young, et al., 1996, 2002; Valach & Young, 2009; Young & Popadiuk, 2012; Young, Domene & Valach, 2014; Young, Marshall, Valach, Domene, Graham, & Zaidman-Zait, 2011). Most of the early work marshalled to support the approach came from the field of counselling practice (Valach, 1990; Young & Valach, 1996; Young, Valach, Dillabough, Dover, & Matthes, 1994). These authors acknowledged the various ways context is understood, for example in the work of Vondracek et al. (1986) discussed previously.

Informed by social constructionism, the Contextual Action Theory (CAT) is based on the notion:

That the intentional actions used by agents can be conceptualized and analysed as oriented toward the personal and shared conception or anticipation of ends ... and toward processes occurring while attaining or attempting to attain these ends. (Young & Valach, 2004, p. 501)

Young et al. (1996) asserted that the term action reflects the importance of purposive intentional human behaviour, as well as the dynamic transformational processes occurring in career choice and development. In addition to individual intentionality, contextual or situational factors are also seen as important, and are inextricably entwined with the individual. Consequently, action or goal directed behaviour can only be interpreted and understood when viewed within context, and contextual or environmental issues are only salient when viewed within the framework of individual volition (Valach, 1990).

Action theory is based on the notion of goal directed action, which in turn is viewed as a function of self-active systems which are characterised as higher living systems. Young et al. (1996) described what they refer to as the contextual characteristics of action, and depict them in a complexly conceptualised cube (see ). These characteristics of action include three axes which are:

1. perspectives on action (manifest behaviour, conscious cognitions, and social meaning);
2. action systems (individual action, joint action, project, and career; and
3. levels of action organisation (elements, functional steps, and goals).

Each cell of 'action' can then be described through processes of interpretation and narrative. We will describe each of these in turn.

Goal directed action can be interpreted from three perspectives; manifest behaviour, conscious cognitions (or internal processes), and social meaning (von Cranach, 1982). Manifest behaviour involves overt observable behaviour, for example completing an application for a job. Internal processes refer to intrapersonal cognitive and emotional processes which occur, for example thinking strategically about how to word a job application letter and/or feeling anxious about compiling the letter. Young and Valach (1996) suggested that emotion, which is related to needs, desires, purposes and goals and can be an outcome or a motivation, has been inadequately addressed in the career theory literature. Social meaning, the third perspective, represents the meaning of the action to the self and to others, for example the completion of the application successfully may lead to a positive job outcome which has social rewards. Each of these perspectives pertain equally to goal directed action, and to career behaviour. Young and Valach (1996) emphasised that "The uniqueness of the action theoretical approach is its efforts to link and make explicit the three perspectives of action" (p. 366). The other advantage of the three perspectives is that they can be applied to the process of career counselling, thereby effectively integrating theory and practice.

There are three action systems, a hierarchically organised grouping of constructs that extend the notion of action and which further action from individual action. Young and Popadiuk (2012) affirmed that contextual action is a relational ethic, emphasising that "joint action captures intentionality that is not fully accounted for by the individual intentions of the participants" (Young & Valach, 2008, p. 646). At the lowest level is joint action, whereby career work is not done individually, but in collaboration with others. For example, individuals discuss career issues with family and friends, and perhaps with counsellors. Thus concepts such as interests, values and career identity are not viewed as being constructed intrapersonally but as being socially constructed, therefore are examples of joint action. Such a perspective provides a new dimension to the conception of the interrelationship between individual and context.

At the next level in the action systems hierarchy is the notion of project. Project allows individuals to develop linkages between actions, often involves action over time, and includes individual and joint actions, and the three perspectives of manifest behaviour, internal processes and social meaning. Young et al. (1996) described the example of a project of a couple who are trying to develop egalitarian career, education and family plans for their lives. Their project will need to be defined and redefined over time, and the example represents an ongoing purposive synthesis of a series of individual and joint actions.

The superordinate construct, career, provides the opportunity for social meaning in an individual's actions. Career also involves the interconnection between all the actions, and all the processes of action operating in both feedforward and feedback ways (Young & Valach, 1996, 2000). Young et al. (1996) acknowledged that the term people use to refer to career may vary, however it is important that it provides meaning over a long period of time (longer than project) at the societal level, and

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that it be conceptualised beyond its colloquial or strictly occupational sense (Young & Valach, 2004). Young and Valach (2000) defined career as “a construct that people use to organise their behaviour over the long term” (p. 188).

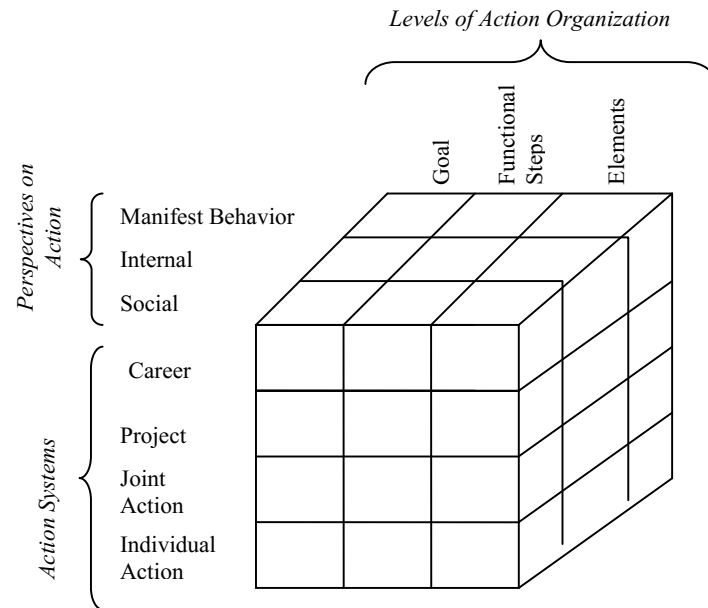


Figure 4.4 Aspects of action theory.  
(From R. Young, L. Valach, & A. Collin in D. Brown & Brooks, 1996)

The final aspect of action theory described by Young et al. (1996, 2002) is the organisation of action, including elements, functional steps and goals. At their most basic level, actions can be organised by their elements which include verbal and non-verbal behaviours such as words, phrases, sentences and gestures. These elements cannot be separated from their context, and interpretation of their meaning needs to be contextualised. For example, Young et al. (1996) described the different interpretations of the phrase “I don’t feel like working any longer” if the statement was made by someone who had been working for a long period at a challenging task or by a long term unemployed individual.

Functional steps are described as behaviours that give meaning to elements. As an example, one partner in a relationship may say to the other “Leave work now”. This statement may refer to the partner coming home from work, or resigning or retiring from work. The step embodied within this statement can have different meanings. Finally, these elements and steps are contextualised by the individual’s goals, that is, the intention of the individual. Therefore in the previous example, the



statement is contextualised according to the goal of the partner making the statement. If the statement was about coming home, it would be about joint action or project. However, if it was about a major life career decision, it would be about career. Thus to return to the cube developed by Young et al. (1996), each cell of career related behaviour therefore can be described according to these aspects of action theory.

The action theory explanation of career posited by Young and his colleagues (1996, 2002) adds to our understanding of the processes of goal-directed behaviour. It therefore extends our understanding of action proposed in the models of Krumboltz and Lent and his colleagues. However, as it is based on the root metaphor of contextualism (discussed in chapter 7), the present event, and shuns causality, it does not provide any assistance in understanding notions of development and process (although these are explained in part through discussions of the social construction of relevant constructs). The interwoven nature of the individual and context which exists through the perspective of constructs, such as interests, being socially constructed illustrates a new understanding of this relationship.

The discussion of social construction led Young et al. (1996) to suggest that their theory accounts for cultural and gender factors in career theory. They maintained that the individual “interacts with these factors in a dynamic way to construct the self and the potential for action and career” (p. 494). While they acknowledged the inhibiting possibilities of these factors, they emphasised that an action explanation accounts for the context in which an action occurs, including culture and gender. Although D. Brown (2002d) believed that this aspect of action theory means that it can claim almost total cultural sensitivity, we believe that this approach denies the gain to be had in theory identifying specific factors of influence in relation to culture and gender (see chapter 6).

D. Brown (1996b) raised a number of other concerns about the viability of this theoretical approach to serve as the basis of a theory of career choice and development. However, a strength noted by D. Brown, one which we support, is the application of the concepts in action theory to career counselling, well demonstrated in Young and Valach (1996, 2004) and Young et al. (2002). More recently Young and Popadiuk (2012) have suggested that CAT sees the social world as constructed through everyday actions. “It differs from narrative, relational, and systems approaches by focusing more broadly on human actions as the basis for knowledge construction than these other approaches. It relies on goals, rather than causes, to explain human action” (p. 19). A large body of research with CAT has focused on parent-adolescent projects (Young & Popadiuk, 2012).

#### SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEORIES

As with chapters 2 and 3, this summary will focus on the main elements within this group of theories. Because of their breadth and complexity, we will focus on content of the individual and the context separately, and on process.

## CHAPTER 4

### *Individual Content Influences*

Each of the theories discussed in this chapter has been included because of its focus on both content and process variables. An examination of [Table 4.1](#) illustrates the greater acknowledgment of and significant emphasis on context variables in these theories, particularly as compared with the equivalent tables in chapters 2 and 3. In terms of intrapersonal or content influences, all theories have been categorised as acknowledging or giving significant emphasis to most previously identified variables. The theories or approaches which give significant emphasis to most variables include the social learning theory of career decision making, social cognitive career theory (SCCT), and the developmental-contextual approach. The individual content variables which have received the least attention include gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, beliefs, health, and disability.

The cognitive information processing approach (CIP) places most attention on the structure and processes of self-knowledge acquisition. As such, much discussion of content of individual self-knowledge is implied. A minor comment on knowledge in this theory is its focus on occupations, as opposed to a broad world of work knowledge. Similarly, the contextual action theory focuses more on process, on action and interpretation. As discussed, this approach accounts for the specific context in which action occurs, including gender and culture.

It is important to also point out the conceptual overlap inherent in the literature, and therefore in some of these variables. For example, self-concept, self-observation generalisations, and self-efficacy are all similar conceptually and where relevant to a particular theory are noted in [Table 4.1](#) under self-concept. However it is clear that each of these also incorporate beliefs. While some theories have acknowledged aptitudes as a separate influence (e.g., social learning theory and social cognitive career theory), in others aptitudes may well be subsumed within abilities.

### *Context Influences*

In comparison with similar tables in chapters 2 and 3, it is clear that context influences are paid more attention in the theoretical approaches discussed in this chapter. The three theories which have not paid as much attention to context include the work of Roe, the contextual action theory approach, and the cognitive information processing approach, although Reardon et al. (2011) extended the understanding of contexts in relation to the operation of the CIP model. The latter two have been discussed in the previous section, and the work of Roe was included in this chapter even though its main focus was not context. Social influences are given strong attention, in particular family, peers, community, education institutions, and the workplace. An influence that consistently remains underrated is that of the media. Within the environmental-societal influence section, all influences identified are given considerable emphasis with only one influence being afforded no emphasis, that of geographical location.

THEORIES FOCUSING ON CONTENT AND PROCESS

Table 4.1 Influences on career development – Theories of content and process

	No acknowledgement	Acknowledgement	Significant emphasis
CONTENT INFLUENCES			
Intrapersonal System			
– ability			
– aptitudes			
– interests			
– gender			
– age			
– skills			
– ethnicity			
– sexual orientation			
– beliefs			
– health			
– disability			
– values			
– world-of-work knowledge			
– personality			
– self-concept			
– physical attributes			
Social System			
– family			
– peers			
– community groups			
– education institutions			
– media			
– workplace			
Environmental-Societal System			
– political decisions			
– historical trends			
– employment market			
– geographic location			
– socioeconomic status			
– globalisation			
PROCESS INFLUENCES			
Recursiveness			
Change Over Time			
Chance			

## CHAPTER 4

### *Process Influences*

The importance of interaction between relevant influences and change over time is again acknowledged by all theoretical approaches in this chapter. The only influence which is not acknowledged by all approaches, and which we think is important enough to be included on its own in these tables, is that of chance. This has only been acknowledged as relevant in career behaviour in the work of Krumboltz and his colleagues, and Roe.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed six theories which have focused on content and process variables in career development, including Krumboltz and his colleagues' social learning theory and happenstance learning theory, Lent et al.'s social cognitive career theory, cognitive processing theory (Petersen et al.), action theory (Young et al.), the developmental-contextual approach (Vondracek et al.), and Roe's theory. Each of these career theories has been compared in relation to the attention to important influences which have been derived following a broad review of the existing literature.

Chapter 5 will explore these theories both in relation to each other, and in relation to the theories which have been included in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 6 will then discuss five main areas where this review has identified an overwhelming lack of attention, that is, career theory in relation to children and adolescents, women, racial and ethnic groups, lesbians and gay men, disability and socioeconomic/social class issues.

## COMPARISON OF THE CURRENT THEORIES

In chapters 2, 3, and 4, the similarities and differences between the theories presented in these chapters have been reviewed. The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it will review trends which have emerged during the historical development of career theory as these will guide the development of themes which will be used as the basis of comparison. Second, it will examine themes which cross the chapter and theory boundaries.

As the previous chapters have illustrated, the field of career theory has developed over time, with each new theoretical formulation either focusing on a different element of career behaviour, refining and advancing an original theoretical notion, or introducing into the careers field relevant conceptualisations from other disciplines or from related branches of psychology. The early work of Parsons in 1909, based on matching a knowledge of self and a knowledge of aspects of the world of work, remained the primary focus of theory and practice until the 1950s. Out of these beginnings, trait and factor approaches characterised by the earlier work of Holland (1973, 1985a) emerged. With the work of Ginzberg and his colleagues (Ginzberg et al., 1951) and Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990), the emphasis in career theories moved from trait and factor approaches with the focus on the content of career choice, to developmental approaches which placed an importance on the process of career development and decision making. Refinement of trait and factor approaches (e.g., Holland, 1992, 1997), known as person-environment fit approaches, included a greater focus on the interaction between the individual and the work environment. Since then, a number of theorists have contributed to our understanding of career choice and development (e.g., Bordin, 1990; D. Brown, 1996a, 2002b, c; Dawis, 1996, 2002; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Roe, 1956; Roe & Lunneborg, 1990). These theorists have variously focused on content of the individual, content of the context, or process. Other theories have attempted to include both content of individual and context, and process variables in their explanations of career behaviour (e.g., L. S. Gottfredson, 1981, 1996, 2002, 2005; Krumboltz, 1994, 2009; L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, 1996; Vondracek et al., 1986). More recently, the emergence of constructivism in cognitive science has led to the development of additional approaches which place an emphasis on the individual as an active agent in their own career development. These theories include the work of Lent et al. (1996, 2002; Lent, 2005, 2013), Young et al. (1996, 2002; Young et al., 2014), and Peterson et al. (1996), Peterson et al. (2002); Reardon et al. (2011). In addition, Blustein's (2006) psychology of working metatheory and the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon,

1999, 2006a) have contributed to the overall picture (these frameworks will be discussed in chapters 7 and 9).

These developments in career theory have raised a number of themes relevant for comparison. The concept of reviewing the literature by themes is not new and several examples can be found including the work of Hackett et al. (1991), and Savickas and Lent (1994). Hackett et al. (1991) reviewed career development theory from a number of perspectives including the cognitive perspective, the cultural diversity perspective, the multiple role perspective, and the developmental perspective. Savickas and Lent (1994) identified themes which became the focus of chapters in their book including the “cognitive revolution” (p. 75), the cultural context including gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, person-environment fit, identity, and decision-making. D. Brown (2002a) identified theories as being psychological or sociological, and being rooted in the philosophical underpinnings of logical positivism or social constructionism.

Some of these themes (e.g., gender) have earned their place in these reviews as areas which have traditionally been neglected in the extant literature, while others are areas of emphasis or commonality in the literature. It is the intention of this chapter to review those themes which have received emphasis, and it is the purpose of chapter 6 to focus on those areas which traditionally have received little attention in the career development literature. Of the themes mentioned in the previous reviews, gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, disability, socioeconomic status and class have generally not been emphasised, and for that reason will be the focus of the next chapter. The present chapter will focus on the themes which have received the attention of many theorists, specifically the content themes of the individual and the context of career development, and the process themes of development, decision-making, including cognitive processes, and interaction and chance. In addition, some discussion will address the philosophical underpinning which is an area of great change in the career development literature since both the first and second editions of this book. [Tables 2.2, 3.1 and 4.1](#) will be used as points of comparison between the groups of theory where appropriate.

#### THE INDIVIDUAL

The need for individuals to understand themselves in order to implement career decisions has been a central feature of career theory since its genesis in the work of Parsons (1909) when he proposed understanding of self as one of his three elements of career selection. In fact, the attempt to quantify personal traits in order to assist individuals understand themselves has underpinned the differential psychology movement which has been so influential in vocational psychology. In turn, a body of occupational information was also developed and individuals could match their self understanding against their knowledge about the world of work, a process exemplified in the work of Holland.

The individual is central to all theories, yet it has been dealt with differently. For example some theories emphasise the importance of particular individual traits

such as values, personality or interests, and much attention has been focused on the concept of self as an organising concept for theories. The major theories have used a number of terms to illustrate the individual self. For example, Bordin (1990) referred to the self, and self-concept was key to the work of Super (1957, 1980, 1990). Other related terms include vocational identity (Holland, 1985a) and self-observation generalisation (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990). In addition, Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) used the term self and drew on Erikson's (1959) concept of ego identity, and L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002) used the term self-concept. Whatever the term used, Super (1992) described self-concepts as "fundamental and central" (p. 47) to career development theory.

While the focus for much of the extant career theory has been the quantification of objective data on the individual, there has been an increasing move toward the validation of the subjective processes of the individual. This is reflected in Super's conceptualisation of the terms vocational identity and occupational self-concept to depict objective and subjective perceptions of self. Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman's (1990) and Miller-Tiedeman's (1999) work are also examples of this process. More recently Savickas (2005) discussed vocational personality as the first component of career construction theory and emphasised the importance of life themes as a narrative through which individuals express their uniqueness. These recent conceptualisations have reflected a significant shift in the career development literature, and are associated with an increasing focus on personal agency, that is individuals' capacity to act for themselves.

Hartung and Subich (2011) gathered authors writing from different perspectives to focus on the self in work and career. The perspectives identified were differential, developmental, socio-cognitive-behavioural, and constructionist. These editors acknowledged the centrality of the self since the work of Parsons (1909) but noted the different perspectives and indeed language of the self as used in different paradigms. Savickas (2011b) identified the language communities in vocational psychology, noting that each has its own paradigm for understanding the self and each paradigm has its own textual tradition for talking about the self – "differentialists use the language of personality, developmentalists use the language of personhood, and constructionists use the language of identity" (p. 18). It is this difference that has long hampered convergence among career theories, although Savickas (2011b) asserts that rapprochement is close with the field viewing self as a psychosocial project that involves identity construction.

Blustein and Fouad (2008) emphasised that the self needs to be understood in relation to the dynamic context in which individuals live, advancing the construct of 'self-in-relation'. The advancing of individual agency and meaning making in vocational psychology also places an emphasis on the self as subject not as object – it is the individual who makes meaning of the 'self-in-relation'. Patton and McMahon (2006a) conceptualised the individual as the crucible for the influences and actions in relation to career (discussed further in chapter 9). These authors also discuss the processes by which the individual makes meaning of these influences via the principles of systems theory. In a similar vein, Lent and Fouad (2011) commented that

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SCCT conceptualizes a self system rather than a singular sense of self or a monolithic variable such as self-concept. This self system is quite complex and concerned with the multiple processes and variables through which people guide their own behavior or engage in self-regulation. (p. 73)

McIlveen and Patton (2007a) have introduced dialogical self theory (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010; Hermans & Kempen, 1993) to vocational psychology. This theory asserts that there is no discrete singular unitary self that is separate from the outside world. It provides a number of principles: first, “Dialogical self recognises the proprietary extension from what is me to mine (i.e., I as son, I as father, my friend, my mother), and thus holds that self necessarily extends beyond an internal embodiment of a unitary self” (McIlveen, 2012, p. 68); second, “individuals may generate more than one I in a psychological landscape, positioned in time (i.e., I in the past, present and imagined future) and space (i.e., here-and-now, then-and- there)” (p. 69); third, I-positions may engage in dialogue with one another and express multiple and possibly conflicting voices. Hermans (2003) referred to the self as “... a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions” (p. 203), and Hermans (2002) conceptualised the multiple I-positions and the dialogue among them as a society of mind.

It is evident that conceptualisations of the individual have changed vastly since 1909. While adding a complexity to our understanding, the new thinking has more accurately presented the complexity of psychology’s and therefore vocational psychology’s understanding of the self.

### THE CONTEXT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

What has become apparent in career theory is an increasing emphasis on the importance of the person and context as coexisting and jointly defining each other (see chapter 4). Blustein (1994) described this as “one of the more exciting trends in the identity development literature” (p. 142), and also claims that the importance of relationships has traditionally lacked attention in psychology. This trend has emerged as a result of the work of theorists in other areas including family systems and feminist studies, and their work “has underscored the fundamental significance of human connectedness or relatedness as an important antecedent to adaptive development” (Blustein, 1994, p. 143). This is also clearly evidenced in the theories presented in chapter 4, in the work of L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005), and has been addressed in refinements of other theories, for example the work of Holland (1992, 1997) and Super (1957, 1980, 1990, 1992). The relational perspective, an extension of these discussions, has also gained a place within the literature (Richardson, 2012a, b; Schultheiss, 2013).

The influence of family on career development has been discussed by theorists since the time of Parsons (1909), and is probably the contextual influence that has drawn most attention. In fact, Parsons (1909) and Super (1990, 1992) drew attention to two themes related to family which have persisted in the career literature to the present time, those of biological or genetic influence, as well as



relational or interactive influences. Specifically Parsons inquired after clients' health ("hereditary diseases"; Parsons, 1909, p. 17), and the business of their fathers and male relatives as a possible indicator of aptitude or opportunity. Since that time, discussions of family as an influence can be traced throughout the history of career theory, with major attention being given to the influence of childhood family experiences in the work of Roe (1956), Bordin's (1990) psychoanalytic theory, and refinements of Holland's theory (1997). Roe and Lunneborg (1990) discussed the link between need satisfaction in childhood and motivation. The degree to which a need is satisfied will determine how strong it becomes as a motivator. For example, needs which are regularly satisfied will constitute lower level motivators than needs which are rarely satisfied and become dominant motivators.

Bordin (1990) likewise made links between occupational choice and satisfaction and childhood experiences. He claimed that individuals learn to cope with the external pressures of others, in particular parents as they grow up, and that these are internalised as "conscience, duty, expectations, and other concepts of modes of behavior required by society before one can be rewarded by a livelihood" (p. 107). He distinguished between intrinsic motives (those linked to enjoyment, self satisfaction, and self realisation) and extrinsic motives (realities such as money, prestige, security). The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motives is linked to the separation of play and work in childhood as discussed in chapter 2. In terms of occupational choice or career decisions, the individual is often faced with competing motives, the development of which can be traced back to their childhood experiences.

In a refinement of his theory, Holland (1992) claimed that emotional stability is influenced by an individual's childhood experiences and accounts for this in terms of his typology. For example, an individual is more likely to be stable if they have "parents whose individual personality patterns are consistent in themselves and are congruent with the other parent's personality pattern" (Holland, 1992, p. 56). If this is not the case, then the individual may develop inconsistent values, interests, competencies, and little self confidence (Holland).

The inclusion of context as relevant to career development has led to the identification of a large number of relevant variables. The breadth of context was identified by Blustein (1994) who noted that contextual variables occur at two levels, social context and societal context. The work of Krumboltz (1994, 2009), Lent et al. (1996, 2002), Vondracek et al. (1986), and Roe and Lunneborg (1990) have particularly been instrumental in identifying contextual variables (see table 4.1). These variables include the influence of genetic endowments, special abilities, aspects of the work world and the political world, socioeconomic status and other environmental conditions.

Similar to the discussion on the self, the conceptualisation of context has been significantly expanded in the career theory literature, significantly influenced by a relational ontology. Not only has the understanding of child, adolescent and family contexts expanded (see chapter 6), but the essence of self-in-relation has become a core construct (Blustein & Fouad, 2008) with Slife (2004) noting that "each thing

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including each person is first and always a nexus of relations” (p. 159). The contexts relevant include all those described by Bronfenbrenner (1979) in his ecology of human development from family of origin to macro-contexts such as labour market and global economic conditions. The Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a, b) has connected discussion of context to systems theory and has emphasised the individual’s role in managing complex relationships in complex and ever changing context through the processes identified by proponents of systems theory (see chapters 8 and 9 for fuller discussions).

### DEVELOPMENT

The concept of development entered into the career theory literature with the work of Ginzberg et al. (1951) who presented a linear stage model of career development ending in early adult life. While their theory and subsequent theories of Super (1990) and L. S. Gottfredson (2005) depicted career development as a series of stages, other theories depict career development more as change over time in terms of adjustment, for example the work of Dawis and Lofquist (1984), and Holland (1997). Brooks (1990) criticised the stage theories for neglecting adult development, a comment which is particularly pertinent given the demise of the theory of Ginzberg and his colleagues, despite Ginzberg’s later revisions. Of the stage theories, that of Super, is the most comprehensive taking into account the lifespan, whereas the theories of Ginzberg and his colleagues, and that of L. S. Gottfredson finish in late adolescence.

The development of career theory includes an expansion in theoretical scope. Whereas earlier theories (save for Dawis and Lofquist’s work adjustment theory) did not expand beyond a certain age or career decision making, more recent developments include and extend beyond career entry. The most notable is social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1996, 2002) which develops this focus further, and includes the interrelated processes of interest development, career choice, as well as career-related performance once the decision has been made. In addition, the work of Vondracek and Kawasaki (1995) attempts to extend the developmental-contextual approach to adult career development. The edited work of Niles (2002) focused theory writers specifically on adult career development in recognition of the focus of lifelong learning and the reality of repeated career decision-making for many individuals.

Another trend in relation to the concept of development is that of cycles, evidenced in the work of Super who in revisions of his work made allowance for recycling through stages. Thus he used the term maxicycle for progression through all of his stages, and minicycle for the recycling process. In line with this change, Super (1992) asserted that the stages have “no rigid boundaries of age or of concern, and that people recycle through some of them throughout the life course” (p. 60). In extending Super’s work, Savickas (2005) included the concepts of maxicycles and minicycles in his 16 theoretical propositions related to career construction theory. Holland (1992), whose theory is primarily content focused,

also acknowledged that careers tend to be a series of “success and satisfaction cycles” (p. 54).

The relevance of the life course, that is timing as it relates to the environment and not only the individual, has received attention (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Vondracek, 2001; Vondracek & Hartung, 2002). Indeed Vondracek and Hartung suggested that the lifespan and life course perspectives are converging and that

the application of an integrated life-span-life course theoretical model to the study of career development, accompanied by the simultaneous use of methodologies that can examine important variables as well as ‘whole persons’ could be just the innovation that is needed to advance the field significantly beyond its current status. (p. 377)

The acknowledgement of cycles of career development has forged closer links between the stage development theories, the theories portraying adjustment, and the content theories. Thus, theories tend to adopt “a more or less implicit or explicit person-environment or trait oriented approach to career choice and implementation” (Osipow, 1990, p. 128). This is reflected in Super’s notion of self-concept implementation in work, correspondence in the theory of work adjustment, congruence in Holland’s theory, and circumscription and compromise in L. S. Gottfredson’s theory. Adjustment and recycling is brought about as a result of dissatisfaction or a lack of fit between the individual and his/her environment. Similarly, in the theory of work adjustment, discorrespondence between the individual and the environment brings about adjustment until satisfaction is reached or the individual changes to another occupation or company (Dawis & Lofquist, 1976). Thus development is increasingly being portrayed as an incremental process which does not necessarily follow a prescribed plan.

Bordin (1990) drew attention to the fact that development while continuous, is “not a smooth, continual process” (p. 117). He also warned against simplifying or trivialising the process of development of ego identity by “assuming that it is solely a rational decision process” (p. 117), and claims that the process is “largely silent and unconscious” (p. 117). Similarly Super (1992) commented that career development does not mean following a path, but rather it evolves or emerges. Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) and Miller-Tiedeman (1988, 1999) concurred, and in their “lifecareer” framework proposed two kinds of reality, personal reality and common reality (discussed in chapter 3). If individuals are guided by their personal reality rather than common reality, they will do what feels right for them rather than what others expect. This evolving of reality reflects the process of change. Similarly the incorporation of feedback and feedforward processes from systems theory into the career process (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) have further emphasised the non-linear nature of development (see chapter 9). Systems theory has also been at the core of Developmental Systems Theory (DST; D. Ford & Lerner, 1992 – see chapter 8 for a more indepth discussion). DST addresses the “how” of development, by explaining the dynamics and processes underpinning change and the diversity of developmental outcomes. The DST therefore goes beyond descriptions of normative stages of development.

## PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Since the previous edition of this book, the significance of the number of epistemological perspectives has significantly increased. These perspectives have challenged the positivist paradigm which influenced much early career theory and practice. Differential and developmental perspectives were predominant in the 1950s through to the 1970s; the 1980s saw the influence of cognitive behavioural learning theory and the development of social learning and social cognitive perspectives. The 1990s saw the strong and continuing influence of constructivist and social constructionist perspectives of career, driving the field firmly into postmodern views. It is interesting that constructivism has been identified in the field in the 1960s in the work of David Tiedeman (Savickas, 2008a), however such was the strength of the early perspectives, still evident today, that the field was not ready to integrate these views until later. Philosophies as espoused by Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) and Miller-Tiedeman (1999) clearly posed challenges to the objective views of career development proposed in earlier theories. Awareness and acceptance of the subjective process of career development increasingly places the individual, rather than theory, as the driver of his/her career development. This move toward a subjective perspective is reflected in theory development. For example, while the social learning theory of Krumboltz includes social and cognitive influences and focuses on personal agency and the construction of meaning, they are attributed a causal relationship. The social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002), developed from work on social cognition, reflects a more constructivist approach in its emphasis on personal agency. It focuses on feedforward mechanisms where individuals actively construct meaning from their interaction with environmental conditions, rather than relying on responses to external forces, or feedback only.

The shift in underpinning paradigms is significant in a number of key areas of thinking in career theory. These include the view of the individual – from a static and “influenced” being to an active agent where “people help to create their own reality through their construal processes” (Lent & Fouad, 2011, pp. 73-74), and “a person-in-context ... who is self-organising and self-constructing” (Vondracek & Porfeli, 2008, p. 213). The relationships between the individual and the context has been significantly changed – with a focus on the self-in-context, self-in relation, and the reciprocal processes between the two. These are only two examples of the changes wrought by these new world views. The emphasis of constructivism on individual meaning-making shifts the focus from the theory to the individual for understanding the complexity of career behaviour. It is within the individual that the theories make sense and where construction of meaning around the multiple influences which are relevant to career development occurs.

Constructivism and social constructionism have been of major significance in developments in the career theory literature in the previous two decades, in particular in moves toward integration or convergence in career theory. While D. Brown (2002a) asserted that conflicting philosophical underpinnings would inhibit attempts toward theory integration, a number of authors (e.g., Chen, 2003) have

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presented theoretical arguments for just such an integration, several theorists have asserted that their theory/framework provides an integrative model (e.g., SCCT, Lent et al.; Contextual Action Theory, Young et al.) and others (e.g., Patton & McMahon) have developed conceptual frameworks that accommodate integration (see chapters 2-4 for reference details). A detailed discussion of philosophical underpinnings of career theory, and theory integration, will be presented in chapter 7.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIABLES

The process of interaction between individual and work related variables was for a long period centred around the notion of matching. This process was variously termed congruence (Holland, 1985a), correspondence (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), or self-concept implementation (Super, 1980). The process assumed a conscious search by the individual for a good fit between the self and an occupation, or job. This process also inevitably involved compromise (L. S. Gottfredson, 1981, 1996, 2002, 2005). The integration of social learning theory (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990), self-efficacy (Hackett & Betz, 1981) and social cognitive career theory (Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002) into career theory created a greater understanding of the development of variables, and of the relation between them. Dawis (1994) commented that social learning theory, in offering a fine grained analysis of learning processes, complements the more coarse grained concepts in theories such as those of Holland and Super. Learning theory extended the work of Holland and Super in its description of how people learn about their interests and abilities in relation to existing occupations, and in describing how different interests and skills develop from learning experiences, aspects of understanding not detailed by these authors. Similarly, the social learning theory of career decision-making emphasises the role of learning theory in explaining how individuals develop the combination of interest orientations depicted in Holland's hexagon model. Finally, the social learning theory of career decision making builds on Holland's theory in acknowledging the importance of environmental influences mediating the link between interests and goals and action behaviour, that is, environmental support is crucial if career interests and goals are going to translate into career entry actions.

Social learning theory, and more recently social cognitive career theory, both attempt to also describe how learnings are acquired. Again, each theory focuses on different aspects of the process (Krumboltz, 1994). In combination, these theories illustrate how people refine aspects of self and their environments over time. An individual's learning experiences lead to the formulation of a group of occupational aspirations which may or may not come to fruition according to a set of socioeconomic and cultural conditions which is unique to that individual.

The degree of importance of cognitive processes illustrates the development of the theories, and their close links to cognitive psychology. Social cognitive career theory (Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002) emphasises cognitive processes far more than Krumboltz's (1994) social learning theory, and in

particular the three social cognitive variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals. For example, social learning theory views self-efficacy as an outcome of learning experiences, whereas social cognitive career theory further describes self-efficacy in a role as an important mediator of interests, career choice and performance. Self-efficacy therefore is used as a more detailed explanatory construct in social cognitive career theory. Social cognitive career theory also describes the mediation process of social cognitive variables such as self-efficacy in the development of interests, and the related effect of environmental variables through the constructs of opportunity structure and contextual affordance.

The theory of work adjustment (Dawis, 1996, 2005; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) offers some points of relationship with social cognitive career theory. Work adjustment theory emphasises the relationship between an individual's abilities and work tasks, and outcomes such as promotion and tenure. However, the process of this relationship is not clarified. Social cognitive career theory focuses on the relationship of self-efficacy as a mediating factor in successful completion of work tasks. That is, an individual with strong self-efficacy beliefs about their work abilities may maximise their performance and therefore their work outcomes.

It can be noted that the cognitive information processing theory (Peterson et al., 1991, 1996, Peterson, Sampson, et al., 2002; Reardon et al., 2011) extends the work of social cognitive career theory (Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002) in the depth it affords cognitive processes. This theory explores in considerable detail what it terms the "executive processing domain" (1996, p. 437), or higher order cognitive functions. These higher order skills, or metacognitions, include self-talk, self-awareness, and monitoring and control.

The construct of action, the central core of the contextualist explanation of career (Young et al., 1996, 2002; Young et al., 2014), also extends the social cognitive theory somewhat. It offers further explanation to the cognitive processes inherent in career choice and in career-related performance, in particular in its detailed description of action as being "cognitively and socially steered and controlled" (p. 483). It also emphasises the joint nature of these actions. The construct of action recognises the active agency of individuals in constructing their careers, a central tenet of Savickas' (2001, 2002, 2005, 2013a) career construction theory. In particular, career construction theory contends that through the imposition of meaning on vocational behaviour and occupational experiences, individuals construct their own careers.

The Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) was developed to provide an overarching framework within which to understand career theories. It also serves as a framework within which to understand individuals interacting within themselves and in the multiple contexts within which decision making occurs (see chapter 9 for further discussion).

#### DECISION-MAKING

Since the days of Parsons (1909) and his concept of "true reasoning", career development, career choice and career decision-making have been portrayed as

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rational, logical processes based on objective information. The maintenance and longevity of this concept in career theory is probably a legacy of the influence of differential psychology. However, while practice still seems to be driven by cognitive, rational, and objective processes (see part three of this book), theorists are increasingly drawing attention to influences other than logical thought processes which contribute to career development, choice and decision-making. For example, Lent and Hackett (1994) posited that “it is well known that people’s career trajectories are not just the result of their cognitive activity” (p. 77). They cited emotional reactions, achievement histories, social and economic conditions, culture, gender, genetic endowment, social context and unexpected life events as influences which “may interact with or supersede the effects of career-related cognitions” (p. 78). Similarly, Young et al. (1996, 2002) suggested that emotion has received too little attention in the career theory literature, and that we need to focus on its role, both in interaction with cognition, and with other processes in career decision-making.

## CHANCE

Chance has been acknowledged by a number of theorists, clearly influenced by the work of Bandura (1982) and sociological theories, even though it is somewhat at odds with the focus of psychological theories of individual planning and control in our futures. Krumboltz’s (1994) work adds some explanation to the notion of ‘accident’ or chance, including place and era of birth, socioeconomic status of family of birth, and genetic endowments at birth, as all able to be seen as aspects of chance in an individual’s career development. A number of theories (e.g., Krumboltz, 2009; Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; Pryor & Bright, 2011; Roe, 1956) have included these aspects of chance in their discussion of relevant influences (see chapter 6 for a fuller discussion).

## INTERACTION PROCESS

The concept of development clearly advocates the unfolding of a process in which the individual is the central player. It must also be remembered that all of the variables in the multifaceted picture of career development change and interact with each other. Super (1992) claimed that the individual and his/her role self concepts are “the culminating products of the interaction of the person and the environment” (p. 41). Our understanding of this process of interaction has expanded considerably in recent times. For example, interaction is the central construct of Dawis and Lofquist’s (1984) theory of work adjustment which suggests that individuals exist in dynamic relationships with their work environments and seek to develop a satisfactory relationship by making continual adjustments in order that the needs of both are met (Dawis, 2005). Vondracek et al. (1986) emphasised the embeddedness of relevant variables, and how a change in one level of a variable can bring change to another variable. The SCCT (Lent,

2005, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002) emphasises a fluid and bidirectional transaction between person and environment; similarly Blustein and Fouad (2008) advanced the notion of reciprocity between the individual and their environments. This concept was expanded within the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) and the systems theory concept of recursiveness was employed (see chapter 9). Similarly, increasing attention on the agency of the individual (Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002; Savickas, 2001, 2002, 2005; Vondracek et al., 1986; Young et al., 1996, 2002, 2014) has drawn our attention to the mutuality of influence, that is an individual acts on an environment in addition to the environment acting on the individual. Young et al. (2002) emphasised that their construct of action is central to their explanation of career process. Development Systems Theory (DST; D. Ford & Lerner, 1992) proposed that the individual as a person-in-context unit is a self-regulating open system. These authors proposed that self-regulation occurs via positive and negative feedback and feedforward processes.

#### CONCLUSION

What is clearly evident in this review of the literature is the breadth of the career development field. Lent and Hackett (1994) commented that “any truly comprehensive approach to career development should account for the complex connections between the person and his or her context, between intrapsychic and interpersonal mechanisms, and between volitional and nonvolitional influences on the career development process” (p. 78), a trend which is clearly emerging in the career development literature, and which has been reflected in terms of how theories are grouped in recent reviews and books. It is also reflected in the development of more comprehensive emerging theories and the refinement of existing theories to a new level of complexity.

It is interesting that this review of the theories in chapters 2 through 4, and the comparisons in relation to each other described in this chapter, still leaves us with a picture of a group of theories moving towards some theory perfection. There is little doubt that theory development is also one of growth and ongoing refinement, attempting to develop an integrative overview of career development and behaviour. Recent developments (e.g., social cognitive career theory, Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002) are drawing from existing work, integrating old and new constructs and processes, and thereby providing an expanded explanation of content variables and process variables relevant to career behaviour. The career construction theory is attempting to advance Super’s developmental theory (discussed as such in S. D. Brown & Lent, 2013 and Hartung & Subich, 2011). Indeed Savickas (2013b) asserted that career construction theory was finally joining the segments identified in Super’s original work.

Each theorist acknowledges strengths of other theories, and points of rapprochement of their theory with existing theories (see Lent, 2005). There also appears to be little, if any, disagreement among the theorists, possibly a reflection of the history in the field which has focused on discrete facets of career



development. For example, Krumboltz (1994) acknowledged that each theory focuses on a different aspect of the overall map of career behaviour.

However, theorists also continue to comment on differences between theories and propose suggestions for improvement in other theories. For example, Lent and Hackett (1994) suggest that “A more adequate and faithful incorporation of social cognitive mechanisms within Super’s theory may prove valuable” (p. 96), and in response to the attempt to integrate social learning theory with the Living Systems Framework, they commented that the “move toward greater emphasis on cognitive and self-regulatory capacities within SLT (social learning theory) signals the potential for reconciling some of its assumptive differences with the current social cognitive career perspective” (p. 96). Lent (2005) emphasised the heterogeneity between the even newer theories with the developmental framework and noted the resulting difficulty in discussing differences between SCCT and the developmental theories. Similarly, after reviewing several major theories, Minor (1992) commented that with the addition of some of the developmental concepts of Super and perhaps of L. S. Gottfredson, and some propositions regarding work adjustment detailed by Dawis and Lofquist, Krumboltz’s theory, which now stops at career entry, could be a more comprehensive theory. Similarly, Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) noted that “Developmental Systems Theory (DST; D. Ford & Lerner, 1992) is a significant advancement over the meta-theoretical developmental-contextual perspective because it includes an operational model that addresses the content, organization, and dynamics of the developing person” (p. 213).

Rather than merely continuing to refine existing theories and/or develop new individual theories, we believe that a focus on an overarching framework is also needed. Lent and Hackett (1994) suggested that what is needed is a pantheoretic framework. Pantheoretic is prefaced by the prefix ‘pan’ which is described as “combining form – all or every ... including or relating to all parts or members” (Hanks, 1980, p. 1059). While combining all theories under one framework is desirable, it is also desirable that such a framework provides some unifying constructs and processes that apply across diverse theories, as in the case of a metatheory (Conyne & Cook, 2004b). These authors comment that “a metatheoretical perspective is an attempt to situate pieces of psychological truth into a broader picture” (p. 9). This is reflective of the aim of the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) detailed in part two of this book, while the key principles of systems theory outlined in chapter 8 provide examples of unifying constructs and processes. Thus the metatheoretical Systems Theory Framework aims to incorporate each of the constructs and process explanations in existing theories into a frame of reference, thereby acknowledging what each has to offer. The central focus of the STF on the individual and what is relevant to his/her career development is a fundamental unifying construct.

This focus on the individual reflects a recurring theme in the career theory literature, that is the importance of recognising heterogeneity of individuals whose career behaviour the theories are attempting to explain and predict. In commenting on the gains in our knowledge into men’s career behaviour that have come from

## CHAPTER 5

our study of women's career behaviour, Fitzgerald, Fassinger and Betz (1995) noted that "as we go into our separateness, our individuality, into that which makes us different, we will learn more about our commonalities as well" (p. 102). Cook (1994) called on the legacy of Super, commenting that "I would expect that Super would once again remind us that diversity of human experience is the rule rather than the exception, and would encourage us to look for universals that help our clients understand the particulars of their lives" (p. 93). A unifying framework of career theory, paying attention to the universals as they are relevant to each individual, would seem to be a worthwhile and useful addition to the theory literature as well as the practice literature. The Systems Theory Framework, first proposed in 1995 and detailed in chapter 9, is such a framework.

A number of other theoretical models have been proposed as metatheoretical. These include SCCT (Lent, 2013), the developmental-contextual framework (Vondracek et al., 1986; Vondracek & Porfeli, 2008), and Blustein's psychology of working model (2001, 2006). Indeed Young and Popadiuk (2012) proposed that constructivism and social constructionism are broad meta-theoretical paradigms as well as epistemological perspectives. The notion of unification of theories was suggested as important for the field as early as 1981 by Super and there has been much work in this area since then. This approach to integration within the field will be discussed further in chapter 6.

However despite the breadth of career development theory, there are still areas which are significantly underdeveloped. This has resulted in the career development of some groups of individuals being more adequately accounted for than others. The career development of these neglected groups, namely women, racial and ethnic groups, lesbians and gay men, people with a disability, as well as the issues related to a number of sociological variables such as social class and their relationship to career development, will be discussed in chapter 6. This updated third edition adds a focus on children and adolescents, and includes an updated and extensive discussion on social class, social justice, and career development.

## **THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT: WIDER EXPLANATIONS**

There is very little argument in the career development literature of the 1990s and into the twenty-first century that there has been too little attention paid in both the theoretical and practical literature to groups outside the white western able bodied middle class male. D. Brown (1996b) commented that none of the theories included in the theory text *Career choice and development* (D. Brown & Brooks, 1996a) deal sufficiently with gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. D. Brown (2002d) emphasised his concern about “the ‘white bread’ nature of most of the extant theories of career choice and development” (p. 511). More recently, such views, particularly in relation to career theories for women, have been echoed by Patton and McMahon (2005) and Richardson and Schaeffer (2013).

More theoretical attention however still needs to be given to individual and group variability in career development across different contexts. As indicated by Blustein (2006), career theory and counselling have struggled in their appreciation of the full array of work roles in the modern world and consistently tried to impose a general career framework on the work lives of people who have very different interpretations of the meaning of work and career. Only recently career theorists have begun focusing on the issues of career development of women, people of colour, and working class youth, and we still do not know much about the development of race, gender, social class, and societal status related aspects of careers. Childhood experiences can be particularly important in determining the diverse career paths in adulthood, because early experience clearly shapes later career development both directly, through skill acquisition, and indirectly, through imposing a cognitive schemata developed in childhood on the interpretation of experience gained in adolescence and adulthood (Blustein, 2006). In addition, a number of authors have identified significant differences in career development within the group of adolescents associated with the social constraints and resources available to them (e.g., J. G. Maree & Ebersohn, 2007). However, further efforts are needed in order to develop a comprehensive theory of careers applicable to ethnic minorities, members of the socially and economically disadvantaged groups, and differing socioeconomic systems. Finally, within a broader social justice agenda, it is important to acknowledge the issue of disability, included in the Systems Theory Framework in its original form (McMahon & Patton, 1995). Governments around the world are exploring policies and strategies to improve social and labour market integration of people with disability (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD, 2010). This chapter will present an historical review, as well as an overview of career theory relevant to

understanding the career development of women, racial and ethnic groups, lesbians and gay men, children and adolescents, social class and disability, noting the renewed focus on social justice issues within the career development literature.

#### WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The major body of work in theorising women's careers has traversed a journey from modifying the major theories of career through to development of specific theories for women, and more recently to incorporating new concepts and understandings to critique our traditional understanding of paid work, to identify when the split between paid work and non-paid work occurred, and to understand the gendered nature of this split. In this chapter, we summarise the theoretical efforts to extend theories of Holland (1992, 1997) and Super (1980, 1990), and the work of Betz and Hackett (1981) and Hackett and Betz (1981) in extending social learning and social cognitive theories. Ecological and systems theory frameworks which have been developed to broaden the focus of the field of career theory generally and to attempt to situate women's career development within these broader frameworks are also reviewed. More recently Blustein (2006) emphasised the need to reconceptualise our understanding of work and to reconnect it with other domains of human experience. As such, recent theoretical work which has focused on creating and constructing new theories which are derived from and which extend relational theories and theories based on social constructionism (Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013; Schultheiss, 2013) are also reviewed.

The previous two and a half decades have seen a significant increase in theoretical and empirical work focusing on women's career behaviour (Betz, 2005). Limitations in early explanatory work, including its almost exclusive basis on studies of men, were acknowledged by Holland (1966) who advocated a "special but closely related theory for women" (p. 13). While Super (1957), the first major theorist who identified women's separate vocational issues, attempted to classify women's career patterns, his work was predominantly descriptive. Osipow (1975) commented on the lack of usefulness of traditional theories of career behaviour for special groups (including women) in that several basic assumptions on which they were founded were not relevant. For example, traditional career theory is based on the assumption that an array of career choices is available to all individuals, who are in turn motivated to pursue their personal interests in making certain choices. A comment on the state of vocational psychology in relation to class made by Tyler in 1967 highlights the inadequacy of application to women – "Much of what we know about the stages through which an individual passes as *he* prepares to find *his* place in the world of work might appropriately be labelled the vocational development of white middle class males" (p. 62; original italics). Gilligan's (1979) classic article entitled "Woman's place in man's life cycle" emphasised the restriction of many theories of psychology in understanding women's lives as they implicitly adopted male as norm and failed to account for the unique social and family situation of women and the related demands on them.

Fitzgerald and Crites' agenda boosting 1980 article on the career psychology of women was pivotal in outlining key issues for research and theory building. While many theorists (Holland, 1985a; Super, 1990) subsequently attempted to include applications to women within their theory with modifications over time, criticisms remained about the failure of much career development theory to adequately account for the lives of women. Further, in much of the literature, women are referred to as a 'specific group' (Isaacson & D. Brown, 1993), a 'special subgroup' (D. Brown, 1990), and theories are discussed as they apply to 'women and people of color' (Niles, 2002; Sharf, 1992, 1997; S. D. Brown & Lent, 2005), indicating that women's career development remains a consideration separate from mainstream career theory, and somehow able to be connected with other groups. In their major review of the career psychology of women, Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) concurred with many other authors (Gallos, 1989; Gutek & Larwood, 1987; Marshall, 1989) in noting that although the field has burgeoned in the previous twenty years, much more work needed to be done to develop theoretical understandings which highlight the unique experience of women's career development. Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) continued to advocate the examination of variables not relevant to men as a "viable theoretical stance" for the future (p. 261). Heppner (2013) also noted the ongoing critique of traditional career theories, commenting that "theories were developed and validated when both gender roles and work roles were much different than they are today" (p. 199). Interestingly Heppner also suggested we may need gender specific theories to cater for the vast sociocultural differences of women (p. 199). In this regard, Bimrose (2012) drew attention to gender inequalities throughout the world that continue to disadvantage the career development of many women that have not yet been afforded an adequate response by career theory and practice. Patton (2013b) gathered a group of authors to explore the current theoretical and empirical position in what she termed as 'women's working lives' in an attempt to both broaden the understanding of women's work and to broaden the concept of our understanding of career as it applies to women. Patton (2013a) concluded that:

Writers need to fully understand the changing roles of women, in public and private spheres. Women's roles in paid work are changing both in their nature and type of engagement; in addition with an ageing population, women's roles in care work are increasingly being extended. Further, we need to continue to explore the heterogeneity and diversity of women. (p. 200)

The literature continues to remain in conflict on what constitutes career for women, or whether indeed we need separate career theories (D. Brown, 1990; Gallos, 1989; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013). Larwood and Gutek (1987) cautioned that advocating a separate career theory for women should not imply that women's career issues are any less important than those for men or those who do not fit the male model. Indeed these authors maintained that existing theories also do not account for the career experiences of many males, and suggested that a broad model of women's career development may also improve our knowledge of the career development of a larger group of males – "In effect, a good model of career

development for women may be the more general model for both sexes” (p. 174). Gallos (1989) maintained that developmental concerns are missing from many proposed models of women’s career, and suggested that theorists and researchers need to observe and study women’s distinctive developmental needs and voices in defining how women see their world, their choices, and their opportunities.

Thus there remains considerable theoretical uncertainty about the nature and development of women’s careers. This first section on women in the chapter is based on three key assumptions. First, while there is considerable support for the premise that there has been change in our understanding of the career behaviour of women, there is a need for much more to be done. Second, there is consistent support in the literature for the assumption that meaningful work is central to women’s lives. Third, there are many variables operating, internal and external, which inhibit or facilitate women’s career behaviour. As such, this section of the chapter will explore definitions of women’s careers, and present a brief background on issues relevant to understanding women’s career behaviour. Finally, it will explore seven main theoretical approaches which have offered explanations and predictions of women’s career behaviour. These seven approaches include adaptation of traditional theories, development of specific theories for women, attempts to develop comprehensive theories for women and men, models which focus on specific individual difference variables important to the career choices of women, sociocognitive models which have application to women, and systems or ecological approaches. The seventh approach is new to this edition of the book, and acknowledges the influence of social construction theory and relational cultural theory in understanding women’s careers/working lives. Constructionist dialogues underpin the significance of relationships as the crucible within which individuals derive meaning. Conceptualising women’s working lives needs to include a focus on relational and cultural dimensions of women’s lives, and to focus on a broad understanding of relevant relationships.

#### *Understandings and Definitions of Career for Women*

Definitions of career were traditionally separate for females and males, with males’ careers assumed to be chosen during post adolescence and remaining quite static throughout life. Females’ careers were expected to be chosen as a temporary measure, until the full-time ‘career’ of motherhood and homemaking. Poole and Langan-Fox (1997) asserted that it is the traditional interpretations and definitions of career which have prevented the formulation of a theory explaining women’s career development. Although these notions have largely changed, what constitutes career for women remains in conflict.

Fitzgerald and Crites (1980) and Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) maintained that defining homemaking as a career choice, that is

equating of a nonstructured noncompensated set of activities (i.e., housekeeping, which has no requirements for entry, no structured standards for performance, nor even necessarily any broad agreement on the nature and

extent of the tasks involved) with the standard notion of occupation appears to render the terminology scientifically useless. (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987, p. 89)

While one of the arguments proffered for not accepting this definition is that women will continue to be undervalued in the paid workforce, other writers have suggested that valuing traditional women's work only by the rituals of traditional notions of male employment is also a gross underestimation (Gallos, 1989; Marshall, 1989).

In describing career for women, early theorists (e.g., Psathas, 1968; Zytowski, 1969) focused on the link between sex role and occupational role, and emphasised the role of marriage, motherhood and homemaking. Zytowski cited propositions that "The modal life role for women is described as that of homemaker"; that "The nature of the woman's role is not static; It will ultimately bear no distinction from that of men"; and that "Vocational and homemaker participation are largely mutually exclusive". Similarly, until the 1980s, interest inventories came in separate versions for women and men, generally reflected fewer options for women, and what options were offered were mainly sex-stereotyped.

Subsequent work has clearly shown that the meaning of work is as potent for women as it is for men. Astin's (1984) sociopsychological model was one of the major attempts to propose a comprehensive theory to explain the career development of women and men. She believed that her model was able to explain the occupational behaviour of women and men, maintaining that "work motivation is the same for men and women, but they make different choices because their early socialization experiences and structural opportunities are different" (p. 118). A number of authors (e.g., Betz, 1993, 1994a; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Cook, 1993) have more fully confirmed that female aspiration "was not absent or deficient, but blocked" (Fitzgerald & Harmon, 2001, p. 218).

The broad and radical changes in the workforce generally have prompted changes in our understanding of the meaning of career in individuals' lives. Parallel to the increasing focus on women's career behaviour is the increasing reconceptualisation of the notion of career (see chapter 1 for a broader discussion). The literature is consistent in emphasising that the nature of future careers will be increasingly nonlinear, indeed that a combination of a number of positions, projects and roles, or of jobs, may constitute a career (Hall, 1996). In this context, a career relates to the meaning an individual gives to this pattern of work and nonwork opportunities. Herr (1992) emphasised that careers need to be construed as the creations of individuals; the word career can no longer be regarded as synonymous with job or occupation. Individuals need to "regard themselves as being self-employed" (Collin & Watts, 1996, p. 391), as they are expected to "manage their own career" (Savickas, 1997a, p. 256).

These current views about career are similar in many ways to the experience of many women. Traditional definitions of career assumed male hierarchical careers, chosen during post adolescence and remaining quite continuous and static throughout life. Females' careers were expected to be chosen as a temporary

measure, until the full-time ‘career’ of motherhood and homemaking. Rather, many women’s career patterns can be conceptualised as a range of working positions interspersed with periods of child care (Bimrose, McMahon & Watson, 2013). Women’s vocational behaviour is arguably more complex than men’s as it is frequently characterised by child-care responsibilities resulting in different employment patterns (Bimrose, 2001). As highlighted elsewhere in this chapter, women are increasingly being charged with responsibility for care of the growing ageing population. Indeed Super (1980) identified seven types of career patterns for women, with a number of them (e.g., interrupted career pattern, [unstable] career pattern, and multiple trial career pattern) resembling the world of work experience for many individuals. The most common employment arrangement in families is for both parents to be working [for example, in Australia in 2011, 55% of couple families with dependent children had both partners employed (Baxter, 2013)]. Most men were working full-time and their employment rate was less affected by the presence of children than women’s, indicating that for most families, men were still the primary financial provider. From a woman’s perspective then, a career could resemble the development of a ‘tessellated’ structure whereby a number of interconnected networks of life experience move the individual in and through self-actualisation. Other ‘careers’ such as motherhood, paid full-time and part-time employment, voluntary work, are then eligible to be included in the structure since these too provide opportunities for self-growth and may be viewed as potentially meaningful lifecareer experiences.

More recently Schultheiss (2009) emphasised data that suggest that women remain more likely than their male partners to change their career paths and to forego different workplace opportunities because of commitment to family responsibilities. Similarly, Schultheiss (2003) noted that when we think of work-family interface we consider married heterosexual couples with children; there are many more family and kin structures which are often not included in the theory, research and practice discussion. Schultheiss (2003) and Richardson (2012a, b) emphasised the need to consider broader conceptualisations of work, both paid market work and unpaid work (including child care and elder care) and Bimrose (2012) argued that the “systematic disadvantage” (p. 55) experienced by many women throughout the world related to educational opportunities and labour market experiences needs to be considered.

Gallos (1989) insisted that women’s notions of career are a rejection of male notions, that a career is not a

lock-step linear progression of attainments directed by a focus on ‘the top’; not a job sequence aimed at upward mobility and success at all costs; not job complacency, fear of professional success or low needs of achievement; not simply a mechanical issue of learning how to juggle marriage, children and women. (p. 125)

Research by Hallett and Gilbert (1997) studied university women’s perception of their future patterns of work and family life and found that college-educated women did not see themselves as having to choose between career and a family.



They assumed both are possible and not all wanted to integrate work and family in the same way. Two distinct patterns emerged from their study: a conventional pattern and a role-sharing pattern (Hallet & Gilbert). In the conventional pattern, the female maintains primary responsibility for the home and for parenting. Here, the female extends her working role to that of wife and mother. In the role-sharing pattern, both spouses actively pursue their careers as well as involving themselves in housework and parenting.

Crompton and Harris (1998) proposed an alternative framework for explaining women's career patterns which allows the possibility of women "desiring both 'employment' and 'family' careers" (p. 123), with their work commitment varying according to both the stage reached in their lifestyle and context, thus emphasising that women's orientations to employment and family life were complex and variable (Crompton & Harris). More recently, in a study of professional women who had left organisational life to develop portfolio careers, Cohen, Duberley and Mallon (2004) reported that while the majority of women "continued to describe a fundamental attachment to work and to vertical progression in their career ... they framed the move to self-employment as a desire for independence, autonomy, personal growth, learning, and balance" (p. 418), not as a last ditch effort to leave the complexity of conforming to prevailing male career norms within organisations. Overall, it would seem then, that the traditional linear developmental and hierarchical conception of career in the vocational literature is not adequate to explain women's perceptions of and experiences of their working life. It can be seen that the concept of 'career' varies for women depending on their life context and life stage. New perspectives and construction of a career theory that take into consideration life experiences and broader contexts are needed.

An alternative approach to defining career for women is to focus on a definition which is broad enough to cover the lifespan and which includes women and men. Raynor (1982) broadly defined a phenomenological psychological career, as "what we do defines who we are, and who we are is determined by what we do" (pp. 208-209). Feminist analyses (e.g., Rose, 1986) suggest that what has been traditionally identified as 'men's' work is largely contrived and artificial whereas 'women's' work is necessary to the survival of the human race. Indeed Marshall (1989) suggested that a new phase of feminism is "looking again at roles into which (women) have been socialised, particularly those to do with relationships and the family. Instead of seeing these roles as of low social worth because that is how a patriarchal society defines them, women are reclaiming their positive aspects" (p. 277). Similarly, by focusing on competencies which are required by or developed by different work, including domestic work, the external measures of occupational title or level of remuneration can be transcended. Within this scenario, women's competencies developed from domestic work are transferable, and can be acknowledged as such.

We agree with Fitzgerald and Weitzman (1992) that

the career development of women, although not fundamentally different from that of men, is demonstrably more complex due to a socialization process that

has emphasised the dichotomy of work and family since at least the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. (p. 125)

Another important issue is the heterogeneity of women; they also differ from each other. Fitzgerald et al. (1995) raised questions about the dearth of information we have about women of colour, lesbians, and poor women, and emphasised that in learning more about the career psychology of individual differences, we will also learn more about commonalities. Indeed in a response to a model depicting an ecological approach to the career development of women, Betz (2002) emphasised that “the concept of individual differences within, as well as between, the genders must remain paramount in career theory and counselling approaches” (p. 335). We believe that the breadth and complexity of the definition of career for women needs to be emphasised within the framework of the competency and contribution of all women’s work as acknowledged and undertaken by each individual woman. An approach which allows an exploration of the complexity of interrelationships which influence career development, such as that offered by the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a), is an important addition in our understanding and in our practice in relation to this acknowledgment. Bimrose (2008) affirmed that “its emphasis on context, the empowerment of the client as central to the process of making sense of their own career development and its dynamic nature makes the STF a particularly relevant framework for working with women” (p. 391). More recently, McMahon, M. Watson and Bimrose (2013) illustrated the complex systemic nature of women’s careers through an application of the STF. These authors (McMahon et al., 2013) have also emphasised the need to develop appropriate theoretical frameworks for understanding career trajectories of older women.

#### *Issues in Women’s Careers*

Traditionally, career preparation activities focused on males on the basis that women’s foray into the world of work would be a short lived gap filler between school, and marriage and full time homemaking. Opportunities in the workforce were also structured around this assumption. Indeed, women in certain organisations were obliged to resign upon marriage until as recently as the early 1970s (Limerick, 1991). Nevertheless, post World War 2 saw what was referred to as “a quiet revolution in women’s participation in the paid workplace” (B. White, Cox, & Cooper, 1992, p. 1). There has been a well documented increase in the number of women in the workforce, from 40% of adult women employed in 1970 to more than 70% employed in 2007 in the US (US Census Bureau, 2011) and 48% to 59% between 1992 and 2011 in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2011). Interestingly despite this increase in women’s engagement in the paid workforce, women still complete approximately two thirds of all household work (ABS, 2009b). An element of this household work is child care, an area which continues to impact on the career choices of women. Women spent more than two and a half times as long caring for children in 2006 when compared with

men (ABS, 2009c). For example in Australia, in families with both parents in paid work, 67% of mothers felt pressed for time as a result of attempting to balance work and family responsibilities, whereas only 49% of fathers reported this perception (ABS, 2009c). With the growth in the aging population right across the world, the role of carers for the elderly will become increasingly important and it is this area that women again dominate. In Australia, in 2003, 17 per cent of women cared for someone who needed assistance due to a disability, a long term health condition, frailty or age (ABS, 2009a) compared to 14 per cent of men. Further, women were more likely to take on a caring role at an earlier age (ABS, 2009a).

However, while the number of women in the workforce has increased, the nature of their participation continues to differ greatly from that of men (Betz, 2005; Burke & Vinnicombe, 2005). Women's employment is more likely to be part-time than men's, and concentrated in a small number of occupational categories. In addition, women tend to enter and remain in low paying, low status positions. These differences are suggestive of structural opportunity differences operating in relation with gender differences. It is clear that despite sociocultural changes in previous decades, which resulted in women having an increased presence in the workforce and in higher education, gender imbalances still exist. Women's increased representation in the workforce and in undergraduate and postgraduate courses (The OECD Education at a Glance Report (2011a) noted that across the 27 OECD countries, tertiary graduation rates for young women were notably higher than those for young men—the OECD average was 46% for young women and 31% for young men. In several countries, the difference was more than 25% age points) has not significantly changed their representation in the higher levels of both academic and corporate hierarchies.

It is evident that structural barriers continue to exist at all levels. Representation across and within fields is still disparate. Women remain under-represented in the powerful positions in the world's top companies. The Australian Census of Women in Leadership (the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency [EOWA], 2010) reveals the lack of representation of women in the top 200 Australian companies by market capitalisation. In 2010, of the 200 companies, only five boards had a female Chair and only six had a female CEO (EOWA, 2010). This means women make up 2.5% of Chairs and 3% of CEOs. Women represent almost half of the workforce overall at 45%; comprise 48% of graduates from management and commerce study areas and are 45 per cent of managers and professionals (EOWA, 2010). In the top 200 companies in Australia, for every female Board Director, there are ten males and for every female CEO, there are 32 male CEOs (EOWA, 2010). Of the Board Directors in 2010, 8.4% were women, 8.3% in 2008, 8.7% in 2006 and 8.2% in 2004 (EOWA, 2010). This indicates that there has been very little change in the number of board seats held by women over the last six years. These data are reflected internationally, with the United States at 15.2 per cent, South Africa 16.6% and Canada 14% (EOWA, 2010). O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria (2013) conducted an updated study on patterns and paradoxes in women's careers and concluded that the original patterns that they had identified in a previous 2008 review had not changed. They commented that

## CHAPTER 6

The increased focus on human and social capital factors for women reinforces the notion that the onus is primarily on women to advance women's careers. Male-defined constructions of work and career success continue to dominate the findings in organisational research and the realities of organisational practice .... (p. 75)

In addition, the edited collection of Vinnicombe, Burke, Blake-Beard and Moore (2013) has emphasised that advancing women's careers is not solely a women's issue, noting that it is a key business and human and capital issue for more women to have educational qualifications and to be represented on boards and in leadership positions.

It is interesting that in 1974, L. S. Hansen detailed what she perceived as theoretical limitations in relation to women's career development. These included societal trends and changing life patterns, and obstacles to the career development of women, such as sex role socialisation, role conflicts about marriage and work, focus on marriage, lack of work orientation, and sexism and sex discrimination. In a positive prophecy, she suggested that a focus on women "perhaps ... will not be necessary in another 12 or 15 years" (p. 1). However, twenty years on, Eccles (1994) commented on the ongoing differentiation between women and men in occupations and the continued underrepresentation of women in high status occupational fields. She commented that "Many factors, ranging from outright discrimination to the processes associated with gender role socialization, contribute to these gendered patterns of educational and occupational choices" (p. 585). Despite the growth in the field of career development theory during the past 25 years, there is only minimal change in the career experience of most women.

In their 1995 review, Fitzgerald et al. identified concepts which had been labelled as unique to women's career development as "pretheoretical developments" (p. 68). These concepts which prompted the interest of theorists and researchers included career versus homemaking orientation, career salience, traditionality of choice, that is how women's career choices involved classification of preference or choice, and career patterns based on the relationship between work and family in women's lives. While more recent conceptualisations have moved on from the either/or classification of home or career, women's traditional roles continue to be important in career choice and adjustment issues. This movement away from a dichotomous classification has prompted a voluminous work on multiple roles, and an attendant discussion on role conflict. Despite changes in women's roles, research cited by Fitzgerald et al. showed an inverse relationship between being married and number of children with every known criterion of career involvement and achievement, and that "this continues to be the main difference between women's career development and that of men" (p. 73).

Betz (1994a) also outlined a summary of key issues, which she categorised as barriers and facilitators, relevant to women's career development. For each of these, she distinguished between individual or internal (often the result of gender role socialisation) barriers and facilitators, and environmental barriers and facilitators. Examples of internal barriers may include role conflict and

mathematics anxiety, and examples of external barriers may include occupational stereotypes, gender biased counselling, and restrictive career assessment tools and practices. A given factor can either be a barrier or facilitator, depending on whether it is present or absent. The concept of barriers and facilitators is useful as suggestions for interventions and changes arise from ongoing discussion about their absence or presence in the contexts of women's career development (Patton, 1997b).

Fitzgerald and Harmon (2001) reviewed a seminal work edited by Samuel Osipow in 1975 entitled *Emerging Woman: Career Analysis and Outcomes*, and proposed "a postmodern extension of his ideas" (p. 208). Fitzgerald and Harmon asserted that various aspects identified in earlier literature as relevant to women's career behaviour were no longer relevant. They discussed individual factors, societal factors, and individual-social factors. For example, while they recognised the continuing importance of interest, abilities, attitudes-values, and career self-efficacy, they de-emphasised the importance of occupational stereotyping and argued that while pockets remain, occupational segregation (at least in Western countries) is more an issue of level than field. In relation to societal influences, these authors emphasised the increase in importance of the media, the economy, and technology and its advances, and a decrease in the relevance of the church. They suggested that the reciprocal individual-social factor, including such variables as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and social class, are far more acknowledged as important influences in women's career behaviour. Fitzgerald and Harmon also asserted that fear of success and formal discrimination are not meaningful descriptors, however role conflict and geographical restrictions continue as salient issues. In essence, Fitzgerald and Harmon suggested that issues of equality in the world of work are more important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than issues of entrance, maintaining that "women may have formal access to careers traditionally closed to them, but once on the job they face numerous barriers to achieving success and satisfaction" (p. 219). Specifically these barriers include issues of inequality in pay and opportunity in the workplace, issues of harassment, and the reality that women are still perceived to be the primary caregiver for young children, and increasingly for the elderly – what Fitzgerald and Harmon asserted is "one of the most intransigent conditions affecting women's career development; that is the dramatic increase in their work participation implies that they are now expected to cope simultaneously with two full-time jobs" (p. 215).

#### THEORIES RELATED TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

##### *Specific Theories for Women*

While the necessity of a separate theory is not agreed to by all writers in the area (Astin, 1984; Brooks, 1990; Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013), Osipow (1983) concluded in his major review that "substantial differences exist to warrant attempts to develop distinctive theories for each gender" (p. 263). In supporting her argument for a separate career theory for women, Gallos (1989)

emphasised that women's distinctively different voice and needs lead to a different perspective on career, and different choices, priorities and patterns, all of which need to be recognised and understood.

Early acknowledgment of the need to differentially explain career development for men and women, and the limitations in existing theories, resulted in two attempts to propose issues relevant to specific theories for women (Psathas, 1968; Zytowski, 1969). Psathas (1968) emphasised that his work "does not attempt to develop a theory of occupational choice for women but rather describes a number of factors which appear to operate in special ways for women" (p. 257). These factors included: marriage, intention and fulfilment; family finances; social class; education and occupation of parents; values; and social mobility and mate selection. Importantly, Psathas, a sociologist, noted the limitations of the theoretical frameworks in existence in relation to their failure to focus attention on the social and economic factors which influence the psychological act of choosing. In commenting on the importance of the setting in which choices are made, and the salience of sex role and stereotyped expectations within this setting, he was one of the first writers to call attention to the importance of context in career decision making. A unique, albeit controversial aspect of Psathas' work was his proposition that large numbers of women in jobs such as teaching, nursing and secretarial work was related to women's desire to marry upwards, and thereby secure status.

Like Psathas (1968), Zytowski's (1969) work focused on the link between sex role and occupational role, and emphasised the role of marriage, motherhood and homemaking. He offered nine postulates in an attempt to characterise the vocational development of women. In citing postulates that "The modal life role for women is described as that of homemaker"; that "The nature of the woman's role is not static; It will ultimately bear no distinction from that of men"; and that "Vocational and homemaker participation are largely mutually exclusive", his work was criticised for the limited roles afforded to women, for the suggestion that work role and home role are mutually exclusive, and for the suggestion that career roles for women are less important than home roles (Perun & Bielby, 1981; Vetter, 1973). The postulates proffered by Zytowski also ignored the subtle and powerful nature of gender based socialisation in limiting choices for women, both in the choice between career and homemaker, and within the range of available occupations.

Other characteristics of Zytowski's (1969) model emphasised the perceived central role of homemaking, and illustrated the limited vision of women's workforce capacity. In formulating patterns of women's participation in the workforce, he identified three variables by which patterns could be characterised. These included age of entry into the workforce, span of participation, and degree of participation, which was related to the traditionality of the occupation which the woman entered. Therefore a mild career pattern reflected early or late entry for a short time span and in a traditional occupation. A moderate pattern reflected early entry for a long time in a traditional occupation, and an unusual pattern reflected early entry for a long time span in a nontraditional occupation. Interestingly, a

nontraditional occupation was characterised as representative of a high degree of participation in the workforce.

### *Adaptation of Traditional Theories*

While Fitzgerald and Crites (1980) acknowledged that women's career development needs require special consideration and are more complex, they maintained that the career development of women is not fundamentally different from that of men. However, in critiquing traditional career theories for their focus on white, middle class men (Gallos, 1989; Larwood & Gutek, 1987), others maintained that minor changes to existing theories were not sufficient. Several theorists previously discussed have attempted to include women's issues into their theoretical formulations. We will focus on the major contributions of Super and Holland. Other theories (e.g., Social Cognitive Career Theory) will be discussed in a later section.

Super's (1957) original theory formulation (see chapter 3) was the first theory to address women's career issues. In acknowledging the central role of homemaking in women's lives, and the related increase of women entering the workforce, he identified seven categories for explaining women's career patterns. These included the stable homemaking pattern (women who married early into full time homemaking); the conventional career pattern (work until marriage and then homemaking); the stable working pattern (work in the paid workforce for life); the double track career pattern (ongoing combination of career and homemaking roles); the interrupted career pattern (a return to work, usually following children leaving home); the unstable career pattern (irregular movement in and out of the workforce); and the multiple-trial career pattern, indicating a multiple change work life. While these patterns have changed since their first formulation, they were an important attempt to illustrate the relationship between work and family throughout women's lives.

Super also proposed specific developmental stages (see chapter 3) through which an individual passes in formulating career decisions. Each of these stages required the completion of developmental tasks prior to their successful completion. Later statements (e.g., Super, 1980) acknowledged that these stages may be encountered at more than one time in life. The stage approach was less than satisfactory in understanding women's work behaviour as they were based on male career planning uninterrupted by marriage and childrearing. Osipow (1983) noted that the exploration stage, for example, was often not truly engaged in by most women as career plans were made pending marriage plans; rather, women often engaged in exploration and career planning following childrearing if they were entering or re-entering the paid work force.

Super's modified theoretical formulation (1980) also suggested the notion of a life-space, in which the many varied roles which contribute to a broad notion of career (child, student, leisurite, worker, citizen, homemaker) could be acknowledged. These additional classifications served to offer a useful way of understanding the complex patterns of behaviour which are women's career

patterns. However, a shortcoming remained in terms of explaining the motivation of women to engage in the various life roles. His empirical work suggested the importance of self-concept and work importance. However while Super maintained that career choice is essentially a decision based on self-concept, no account was taken for the differentiation between the sexes on relationship between self-concept and work “we cannot assume that the process of self-concept development ... is identical for both sexes” (Perun & Bielby, 1981, p. 248). Women’s self-concept may be affected by the work-family decision and subsequent role conflict. In supporting the notion of work importance, Super presented data (Super & Nevill, 1984) which indicated that importance of work as a major life role is more significant in relation to career maturity than either gender or social class. Irrespective of the broad available roles for women that Super has suggested, Fitzgerald and Weitzman (1992) emphasised that “Traditional socialization processes do not prepare women for the complex nature of the choices they will make or the life roles they will face” (p. 135). Savickas’ (2013a) update and extension of Super’s work has not as yet included a focus on gender issues.

Holland’s theory (1985a, 1992, 1997; see chapter 2) of vocational choice posited that an individual’s knowledge of self and the world of work interact to facilitate career choice. The individual engages in a complex process during which elements of personality are related to specific occupational frameworks. The theory proposed a hexagonal model of individual and workplace personalities (RIASEC; Realistic, Individual, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional). Holland (1996b) described his theory as a “one-size-fits-all-groups approach” (p. 9). While he suggested that research supported this proposition, he was provocative in adding that “some people, including some well-educated middle-class White women, disagree” (p. 9). However, it is indisputable that the pervasiveness of gender role socialisation continues to concentrate women in low level jobs, and out of jobs that require, in particular, thorough grounding in mathematics and science. Further, as Fitzgerald and Weitzman (1992) pointed out, it is clear that certain occupational environments essentially remain closed to women, in particular the Realistic and Investigative environments, while women are found in large numbers in clerical and service occupations (see chapter 2 for a discussion of these environments). These authors also raised questions about the notion of congruence between personality and occupational characteristics for many women. For example, personal preference may be compromised because of family or financial security demands. Fitzgerald and Weitzman referred to the concepts of ‘satisficing’ and ‘optimization’ to explain the compromise between choosing a job which is not wholly congruent with career interests on the basis of congruence with other role (e.g., family) demands.

The major theoretical basis of stereotypes in formulating decisions about occupational interests remains a major limitation in applying Holland’s (1992, 1997) theory to women. While Holland’s (1985a) work attempted to illustrate the application of the typology to distinguish between women who became homemakers and those who became career women, it remains limited in failing to acknowledge the powerful restrictive impact of gender socialisation. Research



cited by Betz (1994a) emphasised the impact of early socialisation of girls into certain occupational fields, and the impact of encouraging girls to undertake particular directions in education and training which effectively close entry to a wider range of occupational fields. Similarly, Heppner (2013) affirmed that women's career choice is more constrained by occupational structure and gender barriers so a focus on interests without considering other variables remains a significant limitation.

*Comprehensive Theories Applicable to Women and Men*

In varying ways, commencing with Super (1957) and Psathas (1968), much work has acknowledged the importance of a broad array of environmental influences in women's career choice and development. Nieva and Gutek (1981) distinguished between women's career preferences and their ultimate jobs, stressing that while personality accounts for preferences, many demographic and economic variables account for the latter. This integration of individual and environmental influences in explaining career behaviour was further developed in two theoretical models – Astin (1984) and L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1996). Astin's (1984) model was one of the major attempts to propose a comprehensive theory to explain the career development of women and men. She was invited to prepare "a comprehensive yet parsimonious theoretical statement" (p. 117) on women's career development. She aimed to present "a beginning formulation of a theoretical model that can enhance our understanding of women's career behavior" (p. 117). She believed that her subsequent sociopsychological model could be used to explain the occupational behaviour of women and men, maintaining that "work motivation is the same for men and women, but they make different choices because their early socialization experiences and structural opportunities are different" (p. 118).

Astin's (1984) theory drew mixed responses. Favourable comment has been chiefly toward the concept of structure of opportunity, and toward the attempt at theoretical integration (Gilbert, 1984; Harmon, 1984). However cited limitations included the failure to adequately take into account the differences in workforce realities for women and men, and the institutional and structural barriers for women's careers (Gilbert). Gilbert also noted that assuming the male model of work as the central role contributed to considerable conflict between work and family as there is a considerable schism between our present institutional structures and family roles. While referring to Astin's model as "a shiny fresh minted penny" (p. 141), Farmer nevertheless called for "caring values" to be incorporated into the career domain "rather than (be) at odds with it" (Farmer, 1984, p. 142). Further, Kahn (1984) lamented the reduction in importance of the family role at the expense of the work role. Astin's model can also be criticised for its deterministic nature, whereby external forces are perceived as shapers of individuals' career futures.

Despite its being an invited contribution, very little empirical work has attempted to test Astin's model, with a number of reviews citing no studies (D. Brown & Brooks, 1990a; Hackett & Lent, 1992). Poole, Langan-Fox, Ciavarella and Omodei (1991) found support for Astin's model in confirming the importance

of socialisation, structure of opportunity and expectations, and in supporting the need to consider gender differences in socialisation and structure of opportunity. These authors recommended refinement of Astin's model and suggested a contextualist framework which links individual development to location in historical time. It is interesting that Fitzgerald et al. (1995) were critical of this study, chiefly because of the limited nature of the variables used to test Astin's constructs. They noted, however, that this is also a reflection of the general difficulty in operationalising the theory's constructs, in particular structure of opportunity, and suggested that it may be more useful to view it as a general conceptual framework rather than as a theory which is subject to more formal scrutiny. More recently, the professional women in the study by Cohen and her colleagues (2004) reported the relevance of limited structures of opportunity in their career development.

The second model to be discussed, that proposed by L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005), was presented in detail in chapter 3. It is included in this chapter as L. S. Gottfredson's work focused on processes of circumscription and compromise relevant to women and men. She developed self-concept theory further by proposing that self-concept is a merger between psychological variables and environmental variables involved in career choice. She proposed that self-concept (being composed of gender, social class, intelligence, interests and values) interacts with occupational images (sex type, prestige, and field of work) to determine an individual's occupational preferences. Together with perceptions of job accessibility which incorporate perceptions of opportunities and barriers, a range of acceptable alternatives is formulated. Thus her model highlights the relevance of sex role socialisation of women and men, whereby individuals make decisions based on sex type of occupations and perceptions of opportunities and barriers. Gender type, for example, influences career choice because individuals narrow their perceived appropriate occupational alternatives based on societal notions of gender appropriate careers. In addition, L. S. Gottfredson asserted that the age at which individuals will narrow their occupational alternatives is between 6 and 8, and that once this circumscription (narrowing) is set, individuals will rarely consider outside it. In addition, L. S. Gottfredson asserted that individuals make compromises between preferences and employment realities, and that when these compromises are made, individuals sacrifice first their interests (field of work), then their desired prestige levels, and last their preferred sex type. This proposition reinforces the perceived importance of gender role stereotypes in career choice.

It is interesting that in 1986, L. S. Gottfredson widened her discussion about the issue of gender in career development. She suggested a broadening of the problem to an analysis of factors which determine an "at risk" nature of an individual in relation to career choice. These factors included cultural or geographic isolation and poor education, and may be relevant to women and men and individuals from racial and ethnic groups. Her rationale was that specific group issues may also be relevant to specific individuals. However, Hackett and Lent (1992) cautioned that

different “risk” factors may operate differently for women and men and that such a framework may be restrictive.

*Specific Models Focusing on Individual Differences*

A number of other theoretical models have proffered explanations about women’s career behaviour through a focus on individual differences between women and men on specific variables. These include the work of Farmer (1985), and Betz, Fitzgerald and Fassinger (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Fassinger, 1985, 1990). Farmer’s work also focused on applications to men, however it has been included in this category as the initial focus was on issues and concerns relevant to women.

Farmer (1985) proposed that background characteristics and personal variables interact to foster achievement and career motivation. Background variables (gender, race, social class, school location, age), interact with personal psychological variables (self-esteem, values, homemaking attitude and commitment, success attributions), and environmental variables (societal attitude to women working, support from teachers and parents). These variables in turn are hypothesised to influence three motivational factors: level of aspirations, mastery strivings, and career commitment. Research testing this model has generally supported the salience of background factors such as gender based attitudes, support, and commitment to career and family in career aspirations and choices. For example, Farmer (1985) noted that gender differences were greater for career centrality than for aspirations and mastery. This finding is indicative of the greater role conflict evident in career commitment than in aspirations and mastery. The study by Farmer, Wardrop, Anderson, and Risinger (1993) noted that while career commitment increased from 1980-1990, based on the supportiveness of the environment, women may reject more demanding careers because of a perceived role conflict. This adjustment of aspirations is similar to the notion of “satisficing” discussed earlier (Fitzgerald & Weitzman, 1992). Farmer (1997) found that many women do not consider career as either/or in relation to family, but plan careers mindful of integrating them with home and family.

In their major review of career psychology of women, Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) summarised the literature and identified four sets of factors which influence women’s career choices. Contrary to the work of Astin (1984) and Farmer, these authors believed that theoretical models needed to be specifically focused on women’s issues so as not to neglect any important variables. The factors deemed to be particularly crucial in promoting realism of career choice included individual variables (self-concept, ability, liberated sex role values); background variables (parental support, parents’ education level and occupational status, work experience); educational variables (women’s schools, higher education, continuation in mathematics); and adult life style variables (timing of marriage, number of children). These variables were hypothesised to be causally ordered. A limitation of this work is its focus on higher ability women, in particular women at university.

Fassinger (1985, 1990) tested the Betz and Fitzgerald model and proposed several refinements. Her 1985 study found ability, achievement orientation, and feminist orientation to be independent variables influencing family and career orientation, and career choice, leading to a revision of the original model. In her 1990 study, higher ability levels interacting with aspects of personal agency (e.g., instrumentality and self-efficacy) and sex role attitudes, specifically a feminist orientation, influenced career orientation and career choice. Fassinger's work attempted to include a more heterogeneous sample thereby widening the generalisability of the model. She also incorporated broader methodological approaches in her study in a bid to overcome psychometric problems in measuring the variables. More recently, the literature has focused on a broad range of relevant contextual factors for women (see Heppner, 2013), and in particular women and STEM careers (Fassinger & Asay, 2006; Spearman & Watt, 2013).

### *Sociocognitive Models*

Hackett and Betz (1981; Betz & Hackett, 1981) were the first to apply Bandura's (1977) sociocognitive theory to career development. A more recent theoretical formulation, social cognitive theory of careers (Lent et al., 1994; discussed in more detail in chapter 4) has drawn on the revised work of Bandura (1986). Each one has direct application to the career behaviour of women.

Self-efficacy theory refers to the belief or expectation that one can successfully perform a certain task or behaviour. Hackett and Betz (1981) recognised that women's socialisation mediates the cognitive processes which are crucial in career decision-making – "(Women) lack strong expectations of personal efficacy in relationship to many career related behaviors and thus fail to fully realize their capabilities and talents in career pursuits" (p. 326). Betz (1994b) continued in this vein in describing the importance of self-efficacy in career behaviour – "Because many behaviors or behavior domains are important in educational and career development, efficacy expectations are postulated to influence choice, performance, and persistence in career related domains" (p. 35).

Hackett and Betz (1981) attempted to explain the process of influence between socialisation and career behaviour using the four sources of experiential information about personal self-efficacy developed by Bandura (1977). These sources include performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences (e.g., through role models), verbal persuasion, or the support and encourage of others, and emotional arousal with reference to a behaviour or domain of behaviour (the higher the arousal or anxiety, the reduction in self-efficacy). As an example specifically related to women's educational and career behaviour, if a woman had a level of success in mathematics, was aware of other women successful in mathematics related fields, received support and encouragement from others and had a low level of mathematics anxiety, she would be expected to develop high self-efficacy expectations in relation to mathematics.

In formulating their theory, Hackett and Betz (1981) reviewed evidence which showed differences in relation to the efficacy information received by women and

men. This information difference resulted in a broader variety of career options exposed to men than to women, for example, significant gender differences were found in occupational self-efficacy expectations when traditionality of occupation was taken into account. Men's occupational self-efficacy was equivalent for both traditionally male and female dominated occupations, whereas women's occupational self-efficacy was lower than men's for traditional men's occupations and higher than men's for traditional female occupations. In addition, these gender differences were predictive of the range of occupations considered. Research reviewed in Betz and Hackett (1997) has supported the original contention that women's lower self-efficacy expectations with respect to a number of career variables serve as a relevant barrier to career choice and development. A considerable number of studies have supported these findings (see Betz, 1999, 2001), emphasising the theoretical and empirical support for the role of perceived self-efficacy as a mediator of gender differences in career and educational behaviours. In particular, Betz (1999) presented a theoretical and empirical argument for the mediation of self-efficacy expectations in the development and/or exploration of interests; that is that interest may be increased through success at related tasks.

More recently, Lent and Hackett (1994; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002) have formulated a social cognitive theory of career to explain how academic and career interests develop, how individuals make and enact career-related choices, and how the construct of personal agency operates in terms of career outcomes (see chapter 4 for detail). Built on the work of Bandura (1986), this theory focuses on self-efficacy, expected outcome, and goal mechanisms, and how they reciprocally interact in an ongoing manner with individual factors (such as cognition), environment factors (such as support structures), and behavioural and learning factors. Fitzgerald et al. (1995) have outlined the ways that this theoretical model can contribute to the career psychology of women. These include the importance of deliberately including a focus on those contextual factors which have been emphasised as being important to understanding the career development of women, people of colour, working class people and others for whom existing frameworks offer less than satisfactory explanation. Heppner (2013) has asserted that "perhaps no theory has helped the field of vocational psychology and career counselling and the vocational development of girls and women as much as social cognitive career theory" (p. 205). Another significant contribution of this work has been its application to women's (non)pursuit of careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. A central choice shaping the structure of occupational opportunities for girls has long been their participation in maths and science during high school (Betz, 2006). Betz has referred to girls' participation in maths as a *critical filter* – with girls who complete more maths classes having access to more high-prestige and high-paying jobs. While data has shown that some of the discrepancy in additional study, including study in STEM areas has decreased, it has not led to increased occupational participation by women in STEM careers; women still represent less than one fourth of the STEM labour market (Fassinger & Asay, 2006).

*Ecological or Systems Approaches*

The development of the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; see chapter 9) has enabled a coherence to be given to the myriad of influences on the career development of all individuals. In addition, drawing on tenets of constructivism, this framework ensures that each individual's life construction is at the centre of the career development process, not a body of theory. The potential for this theoretical framework to fully enhance the usefulness of all theory in relation to women's career development continues to be explored (N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005; Bimrose, 2008; McMahon et al., 2013; Patton, 1997a; Patton & McMahon, 2005), with McMahon et al. demonstrating the use of the STF in assisting women in career decision making.

Following the exploration of the utility of systems approaches to explaining the complexity of career development, Cook et al. (2002a, b) developed an ecological model of women's career development. The application of this ecological approach was applied to counselling by Conyne and Cook (2004a, b). In focusing on women's multiple life roles and responsibilities, and the notion that many women may define themselves within a relational or collective context, as opposed to an individualistic perspective, these authors asserted the need for career development theorists to focus more on the contribution of individual and contextual influences to women's career behaviour (following the work of Vondracek and his colleagues, see chapter 4). In presenting their model, important individual and contextual influences particularly relevant to women are discussed.

*Women's Career Development – Relational and Cultural Theories*

The development of relational theories of career, with a particular focus on understanding women's career development, began in the late 1970s and was derived from feminist theoretical perspectives. A focus on relational identity in understanding women's career behaviour has been drawn from the work of Chodorow (1978), Gilligan (1977, 1982), and Lyons (1983). Forrest and Mikolaitis (1986) noted that "women reflect their sense of identity primarily in terms of their connection to others" (p. 80); men on the other hand describe their sense of self by "differentiating themselves from others in terms of abilities and attributes" (p. 80). Gallos (1989) echoed the comment of Farmer in the previous section, and called for career theory to consider women's distinctive developmental needs and voices. Among many questions she posed for researchers to consider was "What does a long-term career underpinned by an ethic of caring, look like?" (p. 128). Because this construct is central to the self for both women and men, Forrest and Mikolaitis emphasised the importance of its incorporation into existing theories of career development. They offered an example by studying the theory of Holland (1992, 1997), noting that women and men whose self-descriptions were connected or separate would be likely to choose related occupational fields. For example, women and men who would describe themselves as "connected", or who view relating to people as important, would be likely to choose occupations within the

service area, for example teaching or nursing. However, the imbalance of women and men within these occupations may be explained by the greater support for women to be connected in their self-descriptions and for men to be separate. Such differences may go some way toward explaining some of the differences in the numbers of women and men in various occupations. In a similar vein, a mismatch between self-identity and work environment may also explain job dissatisfaction for females and for males.

Poole and Langan-Fox (1997) focused on women's careers and identified several concepts which were not present in existing theories, namely disconnection, transitions, constraint, conflict and compromise. They also noted the importance of building the notion of context into the career theory literature at the micro- and macro-level. Thus they proposed two frameworks to explain career development: a contextualist framework and the notion of 'lifecareer', "in which both men and women have multiple options, various pathways, career networks, even career disconnections (e.g., unemployment, retrenchment) which are seen as legitimate journeys over the life course, and not perceived as deviant patterns" (p. 39).

In reviewing a number of papers on women's career development, Hackett (1997) and Crozier (1999) emphasised the relevance of Gilligan's (1982) and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule's (1986) work to various aspects of women's career development, including women's identity development and career choice, stages of career development, multiple life roles and relationships, definitions of career success and career decision-making. Further, Lalande, Crozier and Davey's (2000) research findings identified relationships as a central organising factor in women's career development and that women's career development and psychosocial development are interwoven.

More recently, a number of authors have extended our understanding of relationships and career development (Blustein, 2001, 2006; Blustein, Schultheiss & Flum, 2004; Schultheiss, 2003, 2009), emphasising that their theoretical ideas have been derived from a number of theoretical perspectives. The term *relational* is largely associated with the assumption that human beings are relational beings for whom developing and sustaining meaningful connections with others is a core activity. Theorists who adhere to these ideas "typically endorse the view that many aspects of interpersonal and intrapersonal struggles reflect human strivings for connection, affirmation, support, and attachment" (Schultheiss, 2007, p. 170). Blustein (2001) emphasised that relationships are central to human functioning and that relational systems are crucial throughout our lives. This focus on relational aspects in understanding women's work behaviour is evident in fields outside the psychology of working field. In a model which is reminiscent of the early work of Astin and L. S. Gottfredson, Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) developed the kaleidoscope career model (KCM) to provide a framework to understand women's career choices. This model emphasises that women make holistic choices which consider relationships, constraints and opportunities and that any understanding of women's careers needs to understand that women's relational lives and working lives are interconnected.

A number of new perspectives which provide insight into understanding women's working lives are also relevant in this discussion. The psychology of working paradigm (discussed earlier in this chapter: Blustein, 2006; Richardson, 1993, 1996, 2000, 2012a, b) emphasises a more inclusive approach to understanding work in individuals' lives. These authors argue for the refocusing of career theory, research and practice on all work and thereby addressing the lives of those ignored with a focus on a limited notion of career. Viewing work in this broader way can address the limited way existing careers literature has addressed gender, social class, family background and cultural characteristics. Richardson has argued that career is a limited and irrelevant concept subject to a middle class bias; she proposes that theoreticians and practitioners explore the meaning of work individuals make for themselves. Richardson (1993) defined work as human activity that is initiated "for individual success and satisfaction, to express achievement and strivings, to earn a living ... to further ambitions and self-assertions ... and to link individuals to a larger social good" (p. 428). Within this framework voluntary and unpaid work, and new understandings of care work, are included in individuals' understandings of work and career. Further marking the significance of a broad understanding of culture in human action, Schultheiss (2007, 2013) centred culture within the relational cultural paradigm, providing a central place for a more inclusive study of career incorporating culture, race, gender, sexualities and social class.

Richardson has extended our understanding of the discourse of care work (2012a, b; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013) to propose a broad model of working for both women and for men, asserting that caregiving needs to be given equal respect in relation to work within the public domain. Richardson and Schaeffer (2013) conceptualise the importance of two major contexts of work, market work and unpaid care work, and by extension personal relationships and market work relationships which are contexts through which individuals construct their lives. These conceptualisations extend the traditional work-family dichotomy which was a feature of much of the literature of the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., Fitzgerald et al., 1995). However it is illustrative to see the work of Doherty and Lassig (2013) which continues to highlight "how women with family responsibilities account for their career decisions as contingently lived over time and space" (p. 76). These authors acknowledge the importance of the intersubjectivity that knits human lives together, however note that "While all social actors are intersubjectively networked to some degree, we would argue that some (women) are held more intersubjectively accountable than others" (p. 77).

### *Summary*

It is evident that the construction of a unified theoretical understanding of women's working lives and careers remains incomplete – and perhaps it always will. The above discussion presents a field that remains complex, disparate and evolving, with existing theorists continuing to incorporate women's issues into their frameworks or rejecting the value of doing so, and individual differences models



addressing different dimensions. For example, Farmer (1985) focused on three dimensions of achievement motivation, Astin (1984) elaborated a more broad sociopsychological model, and Betz and Fitzgerald's (1987) factors relevant to the realism of women's career choices continue to be refined (Fassinger, 1990; see Heppner, 2013; Heppner & Jung, 2013). Richardson's recent work reconceptualises how we view "career" and "work" (2012a, b; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013). The frameworks discussed in this chapter have highlighted the importance of relevant background factors such as gender, ethnicity, educational and occupational level of parents, and socioeconomic status to women's career related behaviour. Similarly, they have addressed in different ways the importance of socialisation processes. While internal traits and attitudes have also been shown to be important in women's career related behaviour, the interaction of these with processes of socialisation has not been adequately addressed. For example, if relational identity is socially constructed, can it be incorporated within a male identity? How do women learn gender role attitudes which are career positive, family positive, or amenable to a balance of both with minimal conflict? Betz (2002) expressed caution about the traditional expectation that work/family conflict is a reality for all women, noting that not all women are relationally oriented and that for some women there is no conflict between career and family – "*career is [italics in original] the top and in some cases the only priority*" (p. 338). Within the same framework, Fitzgerald et al. (1995) cited research which continued to show an inverse relationship between being married and number of children with every known criterion of career involvement and achievement and that "this continues to be the main difference between women's career development and that of men" (p. 73).

Much existing work includes "point in time" descriptions and explanations. Hackett and Lent (1992) discussed this succinctly when they reminded us how much social change impacts "social roles generally, and women's roles in particular. These shifts may shorten the shelf life of past research findings; they also highlight the need for researchers to attend to current social realities and their interaction with career development processes" (p. 439). The world continues to undergo repeated and ongoing change and the importance of the inclusion of change in theorising about career and individuals' lives is crucial.

Despite these issues, theoretical work in the career psychology of women has drawn attention to variables which were previously unspecified. An important contribution of this work has also been the increased understanding of issues relevant to the career development of men. In focusing on gender as a group variable, theorists have also identified the importance of the heterogeneity of each gender group, and indeed of individuals generally. Fitzgerald et al. (1995) presented this important development as follows:

Thus from a focus on the ways in which women are different from and similar to men, the question arises, How are we different from – and similar to – one another? And what implications does this have for our relationship to work and family? (p. 102)

In addition to focusing on gender as a variable, recently theorists have argued for a broader conceptualisation of career development. Noting the demise of the recognition of care work with the industrial revolution, and the increasing focus on career development as relevant to paid work only, these authors have suggested that we need to emphasise the public and private spheres of work and re-emphasise the importance of care work *and* market work (Richardson, 2012a, b; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013; Schultheiss, 2003, 2009, 2013). To enable full recognition of women's contribution to work, and to facilitate full choice for women in the future, it is evident that career theory needs to broaden its definitions and its conceptualisation of variables. It is also imperative that adaptability to change and a less restricted worldview of women's place in and contribution to public and private spheres needs to be incorporated into the discourse of career theory and practice. These developments in our field will be ongoing.

#### THEORIES RELATED TO RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS

As discussed previously, career theory has given little attention to racial and ethnic groups. While Pederson (1991) proposed that multiculturalism might be the fourth dominant force in psychology, career theory remains based on erroneous assumptions, several concepts are irrelevant, and important contextual career determinants have been excluded (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1994; Fouad & Kantamneni, 2013; Leong & Flores, 2013; Leong, Hardin & Gupta, 2011; Leong & Hartung, 2000; Leung & Yuen, 2012; Mkhize, 2012; M. Watson, 2013). In particular, as with other 'groups' in this chapter, the assumption that options and choices are available to individuals without some form of social/cultural discrimination operating to distort individual characteristics is violated with respect to racial and ethnic group members. At a fundamental level, Mkhize describes important differences between the worldview of Indigenous populations and those underpinning the western dominated career field.

Another issue with respect to this area is the dominance of career psychology literature relevant to North American cultures, and the question of its applicability in other cultures. This issue has been addressed to some extent by a number of recent works, for example in South Africa by Stead and M. Watson (1999, 2005), Mkhize (2012), M. Watson (2006) and K. Maree and Molepo (2006); in Europe with work by Malik and Aguado (2005) and Barker and Irving (2005); and in India through the work of Arulmani (2007a, b, 2010a, b, 2011). Indeed, Arulmani (2011) explained that "a given culture has been already prepared in a certain way to engage with work, occupation and career" (p. 92) and suggests that career development practitioners learn from other cultures in order to move closer to developing theories and approaches that are culture sensitive.

While research in the area is hampered by problems such as definitional concerns with respect to the terms race, ethnicity and minority group, confounding of race and ethnic group with socioeconomic level (to be discussed further in the next section), and conceptualising and measuring variables from a white middle class perspective, several clear patterns have been emerging. These include the

differential representation of racial and ethnic groups in certain occupational areas, and higher unemployment rates for certain groups (A. Byars, 2001; Fouad & Kantamneni, 2013). For example, as with women, the assumption that the sociopolitical environment enables all individuals equal access to choose according to their interests and abilities is fallacious and misleading. An Australian study by Poole and Cooney (1985) reported that there was no difference in the awareness of occupational possibilities in a group of adolescents, regardless of gender, socioeconomic background or ethnic background. However, gender and socioeconomic background militated a consideration of the occupational possibilities perceived as relevant to and achievable by each individual. While educational, employment and income disparities have narrowed, discriminatory systemic influences between whites and people of colour remain prevalent (Fouad & Kantamneni, 2013; Worthington, Flores, & Navarro, 2005;).

A number of reviews (Brooks, 1990; Fitzgerald & Betz, 1994; Fouad & Kantamneni, 2013; Hackett & Lent, 1992; Leong, 1995) have concluded that there is no model specifically developed to explain the career development of ethnic and racial groups. While several theorists have acknowledged effects of race and ethnicity in their models (D. Brown, 2002b; L. S. Gottfredson, 1981, 1986, 1996; Holland, 1985a; Super, 1990), these have not been fully integrated into theoretical propositions and continue to place “stronger emphasis on personal-level variables than on contextual and cultural level variables” (Leung & Yuen, 2012, p. 77). Leong and M. T. Brown (1995) and Leong (1996a, b) have been critical of existing theories in relation to their reliance on attempting to confirm internal validity at the expense of external or ecological validity. Indeed, Leong and Pearce (2011) and Young, Valach and Marshall (2007) have asserted that the field needs to develop specific theories to take into account perspectives of each culture, rather than try to make existing theories more culturally relevant.

Like the theories of women’s career development discussed earlier in this chapter, career theories can be grouped into three categories in terms of their relevance to racial and ethnic groups: traditional theories which have tried to incorporate minority issues into their conceptualisations or where other writers have worked to expand the original theories to make them more culturally relevant (A. Byars, 2001; Leong & Serafica, 2001); broader theoretical models that may be applicable across cultures; and conceptual proposals which are attempting to incorporate cultural validity through culture-specificity. In the first group, we will discuss the work of Holland (1985a, 1992, 1997) and Super (1990). Within the second category, we will explore the self-efficacy theory (Hackett & Betz, 1981) and the sociocognitive model of Lent and his colleagues (Lent, 2013; Lent & Hackett, 1994; Lent et al., 1994, 1996) social learning theory (Krumboltz & Henderson, 2002; L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996), D. Brown’s values theory (2002b, c), Peterson et al.’s (2002; Reardon et al., 2011) CIP model, and the broad sociopsychological model of L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2005). Within this discussion of broader theoretical analyses, we will include the discussion of Osipow and Littlejohn (1995) who aimed to focus on subtle differences in ‘minor’ variables relevant to career theory and this group, rather on the larger variable of

race. We will also acknowledge the systems or ecological approaches of Cook and her colleagues (2002a, b) and Patton and McMahon (1999, 2006a). Finally, we will discuss the culture-specific conceptual proposals with American Hispanics (Arbona, 1990) and African Americans (Cheatham, 1990) as well as Arulmani's (2011) cultural preparedness approach.

In their major review of theoretical issues in cross cultural career development, Leong and M. T. Brown (1995) emphasised the narrow population for which most career theory has been developed, the limited nature of the theoretical assumptions, the failure to recognise broader "sociopolitical, socioeconomic, social-psychological, and sociocultural realities of cross cultural individuals" (p. 146), and the inappropriateness of much use of the terms race, ethnicity and minority. Leong and M. T. Brown recommended the use of the terms ethnic group and cultural group. In relation to the failure to acknowledge the broader context, these authors emphasised that the factors which influence the career choice process of these groups may not yet be addressed by current theories. Leong and M. T. Brown also emphasised the importance of cultural validity and cultural specificity as dimensions useful in unifying theoretical frameworks. Cultural validity is concerned with the validity of theoretical constructs across cultures, while cultural specificity relates to concepts which are specific to certain cultural groups.

#### *Existing Theories with Cross Cultural Perspectives*

As in the previous section, we will focus on the theories of Holland and Super and Savickas. Holland (1985a, 1992, 1997; see chapter 2 for an overview of the theory) acknowledged that factors such as age, race, class and gender may restrict career options and that in these cases, individuals will choose the next most dominant feature of their personality in implementing their career choice. A number of studies have shown that poor African Americans are found in low level realistic jobs when Holland's typology is applied (Arbona, 1989; M. J. Miller, Springer & Wells, 1988). Similarly work by Leung and Hou (2001) and Soh and Leong (2001) have found that people from other cultures who are classified using Holland's typology may have different views of occupations than white European Americans. Some evidence that African Americans and other ethnic groups may experience lower congruence than other Americans has been reported by M. T. Brown (1995).

Although Holland (1985a) asserted that the structure of interests conforms to the hexagon "even when the data, sexes and cultures vary" (p. 119), research has reported conflicting findings. A review by J. C. Hansen (1987) concluded that "the structure of interests of international and cross-ethnic populations seems to correspond to Holland's model almost as well as does the structure of interests of Whites" (p. 173), a view supported by other large scale work (Armstrong, Hubert & Rounds, 2003; Day & Rounds, 1998; Day, Rounds & Swaney, 1998). However, other studies with Mexican engineers (Fouad & Dancer, 1992), African American college students (Swanson, 1992), African American females and Latino males (Katamneni & Fouad, 2011), and adult Latinos (Flores, Spanierman, Armstrong & Velez, 2006) have shown limited support for the hexagonal structure. J. C. Hansen

(1992) commented that while there is a “broad pattern of structural similarity across cultures”, there are “specific sample differences (which) reflect the individual differences of cultures” (p. 188). This latter conclusion was strengthened following a structural meta-analysis of 20 American ethnic matrices and 76 international matrices from 18 countries by Rounds and Tracey (1996). These authors found that Holland’s model did not fit well for the ethnic groups in America or for international samples. Previous work with disadvantaged Black South African students has also supported this view (M. Watson et al., 1998). However Trusty (2002) has asserted that Holland’s theory modifications have increased its cultural validity in some ways. Fouad and Kantamneni (2013) concluded in their review that more work is needed on Holland’s RIASEC pattern of interests, and on the influence of cultural variables on interests and other constructs such as congruence and differentiation before conclusions can be drawn about its cultural validity.

Like Holland, Super (1990) attempted to acknowledge issues of ethnicity in his formulation although he did not expand on the process of their influence. While there have been many questions about the cultural validity of some of his key constructs, there is a need for much more research into the usefulness of Super’s theory for ethnic groups (Fouad & Arbona, 1994; Fouad & Kantamneni, 2013; Leong & M. T. Brown, 1995). While self-concept as a determinant of career choice is a key component of Super’s theory, a number of writers have suggested that poverty and discrimination are more valid determinants for ethnic groups (Osipow, 1975; E. J. Smith, 1983). In addition, in many cultural groups, self-concept is inextricably entwined with cultural attitudes, beliefs and values. In particular, Leong and Serafica (1995) commented that the degree of an individual’s acculturation may affect the role of the self-concept in career development differentially. For example, in some ethnic groups, occupations are chosen based on family and culture of origin goals rather than implementation of an individual’s self-concept. Similarly, ethnic discrimination may not only restrict the availability of occupations, but may also affect occupational self-concept and more general self-concept. The way in which these processes may work is also in need of more research.

Two other constructs which are key elements of Super’s (1990) theory are developmental stages and career maturity. Leong and M. T. Brown (1995) commented on the lack of research with developmental stages of ethnic groups, although Arbona (1995) examined the life-span dimension to include cultural identity formation for individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups. In addition, the concept of mastering tasks within developmental stages is likely to be unrelated to many cultures. Leong (1993) concluded that the concept of stages was more useful to members of racial and ethnic groups who had acculturated more into the dominant white culture.

E. J. Smith (1983) first emphasised the inherent cultural bias of the construct of career maturity, arguing that the tasks measured by career maturity inventories may not be common to all ethnic groups. Fouad (1994) commented that Super’s career maturity construct may be more relevant for individuals in ethnic groups who had

developed an ethnic identity. It is important to acknowledge that ethnic groups are often also found in lower socioeconomic groups in developed countries. As such, this concept also may need revision with respect to different ethnic and cultural groups, and with the confound of socioeconomic status partialled out of data. In their review Fouad and Kantamneni (2013) commented that additional research is necessary to fully understand how racial and ethnic background influences career development. It is noted that these authors included Savickas' career construction theory in their review of cultural validity of career development theories.

More recently, M. Watson (2013) has offered a critique of career construction theory (Savickas, 2013a) in the context of developing nations and non-western populations. Of interest, despite the relatively recent proposal of career construction theory, M. Watson's critique raises similar issues to those directed toward long established theories. Unlike other critiques, however, M. B. Watson takes a systemic perspective of central tenets of career construction theory. For example, at the environmental-societal system level, he questioned the western concept of career in developing world contexts and the applicability of career adaptability in oppressive and depressed labour market cultures. At the level of the social system, he considered tenets such as self and self-identity in the context of collectivist cultures where the collective good and the betterment of others may be paramount. At the individual system level, M. Watson considered how constructs such as agency, meaning, and career confidence could be conceptualised in developing country contexts. He concluded that career practitioners must "critically deconstruct and reconstruct the career theories that may inform their practice" and contextually adapt theory to the "realities of their clients' lives" in order that more culturally sensitive theory is developed.

Overall, Leong and Serafica (2001) have asserted that the field needs to move from a critique approach to a cultural accommodation approach, and illustrated such an approach in examining Super's theory, focusing on self-concept, developmental tasks, and career maturity. They asserted that through identifying and reducing cultural gaps and blindspots in the theory that its relevance for racial and cultural groups can be enhanced.

#### *Broader Theoretical Models*

As discussed earlier in this chapter, L. S. Gottfredson (1986) proposed an 'at risk' framework which offers categories for conceptualising risk factors which create career choice problems. While not intended as a theoretical model, the risk factors are defined by L. S. Gottfredson (1986) as "attributes of the person or of the person's relation to the environment that are associated with a higher than average probability of experiencing the types of problems under consideration" (p. 143). These categories of risk are influences that cause people to be different from the general population (e.g., low IQ, low self-esteem, cultural segregation, poverty), factors involving differences from one's own social group (e.g., socioeconomic disadvantage, racial or ethnic group, physical impairment), and factors involving family responsibilities (e.g., primary provider). Such a framework is broad enough

to offer factors which may inhibit career development for a variety of groups of people and individuals.

This 1986 discussion on risk factors was an extension of L. S. Gottfredson's major (1981) theoretical model (see chapter 3). L. S. Gottfredson's circumscription and compromise theory was one of the few that explicitly acknowledged the effect of social factors on career choice. She asserted that careers are circumscribed in terms of sex type at a young age, in terms of prestige later, and then interests and values during the teen years. Thus the acknowledgment of gender and prestige as important variables in career choice has relevance to a discussion of cross-cultural career development.

L. S. Gottfredson's (1981) other important process, compromise, is also relevant to cross cultural career development. She asserted that compromise occurs as a function of perceived compatibility between one's occupational self-concept and jobs, and the perceived accessibility of jobs. In the case of ethnic groups, jobs compatible with occupational self-concept may not be seen as available on the grounds of discrimination. As discussed earlier, this process may be even more complex as discrimination awareness may also affect the development of occupational self-concept. However there has been a dearth of research to specifically explore the cultural validity of some of these processes.

The learning principles inherent within social learning theory (Krumboltz, 1979; L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, 1996), for example associative and instrumental learning, are essentially fundamental behavioural principles and therefore likely to be universal. In one major presentation of the theory (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996), an African-American case example was used to illustrate the universality of learning principles. As such, the process element of this theory has the potential to be applicable to racial and ethnic groups. However, the content elements of the theory, for example self-observation generalisations, need to be further related to particular racial and ethnic groups.

The self-efficacy theory of Hackett and Betz (1981) and the related development of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) have also been shown to be applicable to racial and ethnic groups (Betz, 2000; Betz & Hackett, 1997; A. Byars, 2001; Lent, S. D. Brown, Nota, & Soresi, 2003). Indeed, Fouad and Kantamneni (2013) have noted that "because of its emphasis on contextual influences in the career development process, SCCT lends itself well to understanding the role of cultural influences on the career development process for racial/ethnic minorities" (p. 225). They also note that much of the recent research in this area has used the SCCT framework. In brief the theory asserts that career self-efficacy expectations are beliefs about one's ability to perform certain occupational behaviours and that these expectations determine one's actions and efforts in relation to those occupational behaviours. While more research is needed, studies have shown the relevance of self-efficacy in academic and career behaviour of different cultural groups (Arbona, 1995; Byars-Winston, 2006; Byars-Winston, Estrada, Howard, Davis, & Zalapa, 2010; Flores & O'Brien, 2000; Hackett, Betz, Casas, & Rocha-Singh, 1992; Lent et al., 2005; Lent, Lopez, Lopez, & Sheu, 2008; Tang, Fouad, & P. L. Smith, 1999). However M. T. Brown (1995) has cautioned that discrimination

and social bias can influence one's expectations of outcomes quite independently of the effectiveness of one's behaviour.

Adding to Hartung's (2002) emphasis on the importance of broadening the concepts of roles and values to capitalise on these constructs as cultural variables and to contribute to greater cultural validity of career development theory, D. Brown's (2002b, c; see chapter 2) revised theory of work values has been modified to include "a theory of occupational choice, success and satisfaction that will be applicable to cultural and ethnic minorities as well as white European Americans" (p. 466). D. Brown (2002b) emphasised that cultural and work values are primary in individual career choice, and in the outcomes of those choices. In acknowledging that the CIP model is not "a culture-free paradigm" (Peterson et al., 2002, p. 328), these authors provided an explanation of how clients from different racial and ethnic groups engage the respective domains of the CIP model. They noted that further work needs to be done in this area with their framework. Reardon et al. (2011) described situations where their CASVE cycle can be utilised within different cultural contexts.

Rather than focus on the effects of the major variable race per se, Osipow and Littlejohn (1995) examined some of the other variables which permeate career theory and identified their effects with respect to race. They included self-concept (discussed previously) and its close relationship with identity stage development, commenting on the fluctuating phases of acceptance of mainstream society and minority culture. Osipow and Littlejohn (1995) emphasised the lack of attention paid to these issues in the career theory literature. As such, several questions remain unanswered, for example "What is the relationship between minority identity development and career choice? Are there correlations between worldview or ethnic identity and career achievement? And how does level of acculturation influence career development?" (p. 259). The work environment and the variable nature of opportunities available to many racial and ethnic groups were also explored by these authors. Closely linked with the work environment is the lack of opportunity of individuals from these groups to develop self-efficacy in relation to many occupational areas. In conclusion, these authors emphasised the inadequacy of attention of many current theories in relation to the application of these variables to this group.

Work by Ragins (2004) proposed that her identity based theory of career development initially proffered for lesbian women, gay men and bisexual individuals is also appropriate for career challenges associated with stigmatised and minority groups generally. D. Brown (2002d) asserted that such theories can claim almost total cultural sensitivity as they are not based on attempts to generalise across individuals or groups.

A number of authors have developed systems or ecological frameworks, whose holistic natures assist in providing inclusive explanations for career development of all individuals (N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005; Patton & McMahon, 1997, 1999, 2006a), and women, including women of colour (Cook et al., 2002a, b). The UNESCO Handbook on Career Counselling (UNESCO, 2002) acknowledged the usefulness of the Systems Theory Framework (STF, Patton & McMahon) in



providing a framework for career counselling in working with groups across cultures. In addition, through its My System of Career Influences reflection processes for adolescents and adults (McMahon, Patton, & M. Watson, 2005a, b; McMahon, M. Watson, & Patton, 2013a, b) and use across cultures, the STF has been shown to have cross-cultural applicability (N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005; McMahon, M. Watson, et al., 2008; Patton, McMahon & M. Watson, 2006).

#### *Culture-specific Conceptual Models*

Finally, in an attempt to clarify the career behaviour of particular ethnic and cultural groups, theorists have developed culture-specific models to highlight relevant career development issues. In commenting on this focus with particular minority groups, Arbona (1996) emphasised that

we need to identify the specific elements of each minority group's experience that contribute to the proposed relationship among race, ethnicity, culture, and career development variables ... Only then will we be able to determine if there is sufficient overlap across groups to warrant talking about the career development of ethnic minorities as a group. (p. 47)

In the same vein, Hesketh and Rounds (1995) also commented on the value of specific theories that are capable of generalisation – “there may be value in our developing theories through the ongoing process of comparing and contrasting different cultures. In this way, the universal aspects of the theory will be apparent, as will the need for specific components to deal with particular cultural contexts” (p. 385). While Leong and M. T. Brown (1995) discussed culture-specific models extensively, the scope of this chapter will restrict our discussion to two models (i.e., Arbona, 1990; Cheatham, 1990). Arulmani (2011) has discussed the culture preparedness approach, suggesting its importance for career theorists and practitioners in understanding different cultures.

In reviewing the relationship between career theory and educational development and academic achievement as they interact with ethnicity and social class, Arbona's (1990) integrative review concluded that career theories may have some use for Hispanics of average academic achievement for whom the worker role is salient, regardless of socioeconomic level. However, they asserted that they were not relevant to clients who have limited access to education and for whom concepts of career choice are limited. She proposed a model that suggested the salience of structural barriers and problems of access as more relevant than interests and aspirations in occupational mobility among diverse Hispanic groups. That is, she suggested that contextual factors may be more relevant than individual factors for those in this group. A focus on the heterogeneity of Hispanic Americans also led to a call for research examining subcultural factors influencing career behaviour.

Cheatham (1990) proposed a model based on the concept of Afrocentrism. He stressed the interplay between African American culture and European American culture, and identified several cultural dualisms which he suggested needed to be

measured in order to document their relationship with career behaviour. One of these dualisms included the cultural construction of values. For example, Afrocentric cultural values of affiliation, collectivity, interdependence and a different value attached to work are in stark contrast to dominant European American or Western values of individualism, competition, mastery over nature as opposed to harmony with nature. Another cultural difference is the Western adherence to measured time (indicated by an often repeated saying 'a race against the clock') as opposed to experientially living with time.

#### THEORIES RELATED TO THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

There has been a dearth of attention directed toward the unique career development issues relevant to lesbians and gay men, a minority group which receives more negative bias than any other (Herr & Cramer, 1992). Chung (2003) however, outlined numerous significant developments that emerged in the 1990s. Since a 1989 article on career counselling with lesbians (Hetherington & Orzek, 1989), texts (e.g., Diamant, 1993; Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996), and several research and review articles (K. Morgan & L. Brown, 1991) have appeared. In 1991, *The Counseling Psychologist* (Fassinger, 1991) devoted a special issue to counselling lesbians and gay men, and special sections of *The Career Development Quarterly* (Pope, 1995) and the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* (Croteau & Bieschke, 1996) have been devoted to the issue. More recently, there has been an increasing focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals (LGBT) in the career development (Chung, Williams, & Dispenza, 2009) and more broad counselling literature (Croteau, Bieschke, Fassinger, & Manning, 2008; Dwarkin & Pope, 2012). Despite the increasing focus on LGBT individuals as a group, largely because they share similar experiences of stigma and marginalisation, Prince (2013) asserted that individual group differences also need to be remembered.

Internal and environmental issues relevant to the career development of these individuals and separate from those relevant to heterosexuals have been highlighted (Fassinger, 1995; Fassinger & Arsenau, 2007; Hetherington, 1991). Prior to an exploration of these issues, we will briefly discuss broad contextual issues relevant to lesbians and gay men in particular. We focus on these groups as there has been a greater focus in the literature. Subsequently we consider theoretical explanations relevant to the career development of lesbians and gay men.

It is clear that many issues for lesbians and gay men are similar to those identified for women and racial and ethnic minority groups. Chung (1995) supported the suggestion by K. Morgan and L. Brown (1991) that minority career development theories (e.g., those related to women and racial and ethnic groups) be appropriately used to explain the vocational issues of lesbians and gay men. However, lesbians in particular live in a patriarchal and heterosexist world; several authors (Hetherington & Orzek, 1989; K. Morgan & L. Brown, 1991) have commented on the combined minority status of lesbians in dealing with gender and

sexual orientation issues, facing what Betz (1994a) and others (Patton, 1997a) have referred to as “double jeopardy”. Fassinger (1995) also referred to the triple minority status experienced by coloured lesbians.

It is also important, as in the discussion with women and racial and ethnic groups, not to assume heterogeneity of gay people generally, and of each gender based group. For example, Etringer, Hillerbrand, and Hetherington (1990) found that gay men have the greatest uncertainty about vocational choices and are more dissatisfied with their choices than nongay men or lesbian women. Further, lesbians are more likely to be in lower paying jobs than gay men, and employed below their skill and educational level (Elliott, 1993a, b; K. Morgan & L. Brown, 1991). Fassinger and Arsenau (2007) affirmed the need to understand the many between and within group differences within lesbian and gay populations.

Given the importance of self-concept and identity formation in all major theories of career development, several issues relevant to identity development for lesbians and gay men add an additional level of complexity. Croteau, Anderson, Distefano, and Kampa-Kokesch’s (2000) review of empirical and theoretical work in lesbian and gay vocational psychology named sexual identity development theory as the most frequently discussed conceptual framework in the general lesbian, gay and bisexual and transgender psychology literature. First, Fassinger (1995) commented that in relation to lesbians, the demands of identity issues may result in the neglect of career development issues. As lesbian identity is not usually clarified until late adolescence or adulthood, or may be “stalled, delayed, or misdirected as a result of the amount of psychic energy required to integrate a positive lesbian or gay identity into the total self-concept” (Croteau et al., p. 390), the inclusion of an individual identity into career planning may not occur until after important early periods of career development (K. Morgan & L. Brown, 1991). Second, the identification of self as gay may eliminate a number of potential career options, in particular those in which being gay has marked negative consequences (e.g., teaching and the military). Third, many lesbians may experience estrangement from families, a major influence on women’s career development. Finally, the coming out process often results in “a temporary (but dramatic) decrease in self-esteem and new complexities in self-concept” (Fassinger, 1995, p. 155). These effects have complex implications for career development for lesbians and gay men (Croteau, Anderson, & VanderWal, 2008; Hetherington, 1991; Hetherington, Hillerbrand, & Etringer, 1989; Prince, 1995).

In addition to these individual issues, a number of authors (Elliott, 1993b; Fassinger 1995; Hetherington, 1991; Ragins, 2004) have identified a range of contextual issues relevant to the career development of lesbians and gay men. These include occupational stereotyping (assumptions that certain occupations are lesbian and gay specific) and occupational discrimination (rejecting or discouraging lesbians and gays in particular fields; see Croteau et al., 2000, for a review). K. Morgan and L. Brown (1991) discussed Astin’s (1984) concept of opportunity structure (discussed earlier in this chapter) in relation to lesbians’ occupational stereotyping. They noted its usefulness in acknowledging how changing societal and political views relevant to gays and occupations may affect

the opportunity structure. The possible late development of a gay identity may also affect an individual's perception of opportunity structure.

Additional issues raised by Fassinger (1995) included the difficulty in having one's occupational identity strengthened by role models as so many lesbians, gay men, and bisexual and transgender individuals remain closeted (Nauta, Saucier, & Woodard, 2001); the negative bias in testing and counselling (see Chernin, Holden, & Chandler, 1997 in a special issue of *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*); and the null environment (Betz, 1989) in education and the wider social environment. The null environment is described by Betz as "an environment that neither encourages nor discourages individuals – it simply ignores them" (p. 17).

However, in her discussion of vocational issues for lesbians, Fassinger (1995, 1996) also identified some positive aspects of identity which lesbians bring to the process of career choice. In particular, she noted that lesbians exhibit more liberal gender roles than heterosexual women (Hetherington & Orzek, 1989; K. Morgan & L. Brown, 1991). As a result, they may illustrate greater flexibility in choosing a broader array of occupations. Research with women discussed previously has shown that traditional gender roles can limit women's career choices (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Fitzgerald et al., 1995). Similarly, Chung and Harmon (1994) reported that gay men were more likely than heterosexual men to endorse gender atypical interests and to aspire to gender non-traditional occupations.

### *Theoretical Explanations*

A number of writers have identified shortcomings in existing theories of career development and have either proposed new theoretical models or have attempted to address issues in existing theories. For example, writers have addressed identity issues in Super's theory (Dunkle, 1996); Holland's theory (Mobley & Slaney, 1996), and sociocognitive theory (Morrow, Gore, & B. W. Campbell, 1996). K. Morgan and L. Brown (1991) discussed L. S. Gottfredson's (1981) circumscription and compromise theory and its applicability to lesbians. In particular, L. S. Gottfredson explored the premise that in limiting career options, individuals will give up interests first, status second, and sex type of the career last, that is they will hold to this most. Given the more liberal gender roles of lesbians, K. Morgan and L. Brown (1991) suggested that they may be less influenced by sex type of an occupation and therefore may focus on interests and status. This may result in more realistic choices which exhibit congruence with interests. Economic necessity, with lesbians aware of the necessity of being self-supporting, may also explain career choices in male dominated fields. More recently, research by Datti (2009) affirmed that genetic, environmental, learning and skill development factors may circumscribe and influence the career choices of young gay men and lesbians.

Prince (2013) noted that an increasing body of research is using SCCT as a useful theoretical framework in exploring a number of career development issues for lesbian and gay individuals. This research has especially focused on sexuality

identity management within the workplace for LGBT individuals (e.g., Chung et al., 2009; Lidderdale, Croteau, Anderson, Tovar-Murray, & Davis, 2007).

K. Morgan and L. Brown (1991) also explored the theories of Farmer (1985) and Astin (1984) and commented on their applicability to lesbians. They noted that Farmer's three factors which influence career development (background variables, person psychological variables, environmental variables) are applicable to lesbians. In particular, they added sexual orientation to Farmer's background variables, androgyny and valuing independence to her personality variables, and support for a lesbian per se, and for lesbians in particular occupations, to her environmental variables.

In relation to Astin's theory, K. Morgan and L. Brown (1991) focused on the differential timing of the coming out process for lesbians (and gay men), and how this would affect the perception of the opportunity structure. In addition, the work motivation and work expectations of lesbians may be different from that of heterosexual women who may have an expectation of getting married and working in the home.

As discussed, existing theories of career development have failed to acknowledge the differential and recursive identity and life development of lesbians and gays, and the impact of workplace discrimination on interest and choice. Ragins (2004) developed an identity based theory of lesbian, gay and bisexual careers in order to address these limitations, a theory which focused on internal and external sexual identity processes, and which emphasised the non-linear and unfolding process of the influence of sexual orientation on career development.

Fassinger (1995) echoed previous work (Fitzgerald et al., 1995) which illustrated that research on women has expanded our knowledge of the career development of men as well. She suggested that research on the career choice process of lesbians may assist in untangling the effects of gender roles relative to other variables which impact upon women's career planning generally. K. Morgan and L. Brown (1991) reiterated this assertion and also suggested that "the development of a theory of lesbian career development, based on the experiences of the diverse population of lesbians, might shed new and different light on our paradigms for all women's career development" (p. 289). Similarly, Ragins (2004) commented that her theoretical framework could also be applied to other stigmatised and minority groups.

In sum, while there continues to be a growing body of literature exploring career development and work related issues for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population, much of it remains relatively atheoretical. While there are social changes in relation to the status of these individuals within society, many environmental barriers remain and much work needs to be undertaken to provide theoretical support for practitioners working to assist in the career development process.

THEORIES RELATED TO THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF  
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

The past two decades have been marked by a considerable expansion of research on career development in childhood and adolescence. This expansion has been partly driven by developmental and lifespan psychology perspectives, and has also driven vocational psychology toward integrating early vocational behaviour into lifespan, systemic models of careers. In this regard, two reviews of childhood career development (Hartung et al., 2005; M. Watson & McMahon, 2005a) identified key issues facing childhood career development theory, research and practice. In order to understand the antecedents and outcomes of the process of children's and adolescents' dynamic interactive engagement with their environments, we need to take into account all aspects of their development, the mediating role of the many relevant contexts, including family status at birth and resulting opportunity structure.

Skorikov and Patton (2007a) drew together a large number of authors to present a comprehensive overview of theory and research in vocational psychology and related disciplines, work which has substantially enhanced our understanding of children's and adolescents' career development. Significant theoretical and empirical advancements have been made in research on children's and adolescents' occupational exploration, interests, aspirations, expectations, and decision-making. In addition, the role of work experience and contextual factors of career development in children's and adolescents' career development has been explored. Theoretical perspectives derived from developments in career theory, such as developmental-contextualism and social constructionism have encouraged an acceptance of career development as a process of dynamic interaction between individuals and their environments, and that this process begins at birth. Children's and adolescents' career-related attitudes and behaviour undergo a range of changes as a result of the epigenetic unfolding of the child's capabilities and learning through self-chosen and socially assigned vocational, educational, and leisure activities. This process of change is guided and mediated by the context of significant relationships and social conditions, such as societal norms, economy, and technological change, which set developmental career tasks and provide resources for accomplishing them.

The authors contributing to Skorikov and Patton's (2007a) book also acknowledged limitations in the existing theories and empirical knowledge that reflected those of previous reviews of childhood career development (Hartung et al., 2005; M. Watson & McMahon, 2005a). Specifically, much of the extant work is a descriptive rather than explanatory analysis of career development that occurs during childhood and adolescence. Authors summarily acknowledged that a much deeper understanding of the factors and mechanisms of career exploration, choice and commitment need to be developed. This section will focus on theoretical understandings in relation to children's and adolescents' career development. Readers are referred to the volume for further reading in relation to research and practice suggestions.

“Whereas over the past 20 years there has been a considerable increase in the scope of research conducted on children and adolescents, there has been little development in relevant theory” (Skorikov & Patton, 2007b, p. 326), either in redeveloping existing theories or in developing new ones. L. S. Gottfredson’s (2005) theory of circumscription and compromise remains the only developed career theory which has focused on this age group. This dearth of theory is despite a strongly developing theoretical underpinning in the area of developmental science, developmental systems, and theories of human development (Damon & Lerner, 2006). Indeed, Lerner (2006) has commented that the field of human development, labeled as developmental psychology a decade ago, is now more interdisciplinary, or “disciplinarily integrative” (p. 4) and labeled as developmental science. It would seem that career development theorists/vocational psychologists still have not sufficiently connected the study of children’s and adolescents’ careers within this field. Interestingly this view is shared from the adolescent development literature as well, as Staff, Messersmith and Schulenberg (2009) have asserted that “Within the study of adolescent development, career development is the little known sibling of paid work” (p. 270). This is so even though paid work, as an example, provides such an important context for development of a number of career development constructs, for example interests, decision making, adolescent identity development and peer and family relations. It is important that theorising about career development is more interconnected with general theory of human development and provides a more holistic perspective on vocational development and its relationships with other domains of development than currently available. Career development is closely intertwined with skill learning, academic attainment, values formation, identity development, adjustment, and mental health, and ultimately a theory of career development should describe and explain vocational behaviour within the general framework of child, adolescent, and adult development. McMahon and M. Watson (2008) edited a special issue of *The Career Development Quarterly*, drawing together theorists and practitioners. These authors reiterated the dearth of work focusing on children’s career development and emphasised the need to situate it into life span career development and explore “the how and what of children’s career development” (p. 5). In summarising the contributions to the special edition, M. Watson and McMahon (2008) proposed specific suggestions to encourage writers in the field to move its study forward.

The collection of contributions by Skorikov and Patton (2007a), in conjunction with the work from the special issue of *The Career Development Quarterly* (McMahon & M. Watson, 2008a) and reviews of research on children’s career development (Hartung et al., 2005; M. Watson & McMahon, 2005a), have affirmed that children begin developing an understanding of the world of work, forming realistic occupational interests and aspirations, and engaging in career relevant exploration at a young age. Indeed, recent studies have suggested that elementary and middle school children begin contemplating career directions and considering obstacles on their way toward accomplishing possible career goals (Auger, Blackhurst, & Wahl, 2005; Creed, Conlon, & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). At the same time, some of the previously observed characteristics of early career

development, such as gender stereotyping, appear to exert their effects later than previous theories have suggested (e.g., Creed et al., 2007; Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). Similarly an increasing body of work has demonstrated a relationship between adolescent career development constructs and early work experiences (e.g., in career maturity, Patton, Creed, & Muller, 2002; career decision making certainty, Creed, Prideaux, & Patton, 2005; and in occupational aspirations and work values, Porfeli, 2007 to name just a few; see Mortimer & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007; Staff et al., 2009; Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006 for comprehensive reviews). Thus, there is a clear need for incorporating the results of recent research in career theory. Career development during adolescence becomes progressively more complex in the modern world, as noted by many of the chapter authors. Extending normative education and the overall transition to adulthood well into the mid twenties along with increasing ambiguity in societal expectations of the young (Mortimer & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007) also pose challenges to update theories of child and adolescent career development.

In summarising the contributions of their edited volume, the first book dedicated to the career development of children and adolescents, Skorikov and Patton (2007b) emphasised the need for a greater integration of theory and research. These authors commented that there is much empirical work that is atheoretical in its derivation, and promising new and emerging theories which have not yet integrated empirical material into their conceptual models and explanatory propositions. Similar conclusions were drawn by M. Watson and McMahon (2008) who noted the importance of children's career development to be contextualised within an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. These authors also emphasised the need to refocus research methodologies within this age group.

#### SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In addition to women, racial and ethnic groups, and lesbians and gay men, there has been little theoretical attention given to the complexity of socioeconomic status and other sociological issues in relation to career development. One of the often repeated criticisms of psychological theories of career development is their failure to focus in a detailed way on sociological variables. D. Brown (1996b) commented that of the psychological theories which were presented in the career theory text, only the work of L. S. Gottfredson (1996, discussed in this book in chapter 3) incorporated sociological variables in a detailed way in her theory. Other theorists (e.g., Lent et al., 1996; Super et al., 1996) mentioned the relevance of sociological variables such as social class and educational options, but only in a nonspecific way. Blustein (2001) has recently argued that vocational psychology "has been profoundly shaped by classism" (p. 175). Along with Richardson (1993, 1996, 2000) who argued that vocational psychology is caught within a middle class and culturally encapsulated framework, he emphasised that it needs to be much more inclusive and embrace much broader considerations of work and career. More recently, authors have emphasised the failure of vocational psychology to really attend to the notion that for most working people, work does not provide the



opportunity to implement their interests, values, and abilities in their work lives (Blustein, 2006, 2008; Fouad & M. T. Brown, 2000; Navarro, Flores, & Worthington, 2007; Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Richardson, 1993, 2000). These authors have affirmed the need for social class perspectives to be included in theoretical and practical discussions in this field. Indeed, Roberts' (2012) contention that "the extent to which family socioeconomic status governs individuals' lifetime achievements is unlikely to diminish" (p. 40) underscores the need for revision of career theory to take account of social class.

There has been considerable development in this area within the vocational psychology literature since the previous edition of this book. As such we will review the sociological literature, and then present the work which has significantly advanced our thinking in this area.

Focusing on social class in career development until the previous two decades has been largely left to sociologists who have made significant contributions to our understanding of factors relevant to career development. Within this thinking, career development is viewed in relation to its contextual or situational determinants such as social class membership, economic opportunities, and the organisation of the world of work. In direct contrast to the traditional assumption that the individual has unfettered capacity and means to make career decisions, Roberts (1968, 1977, 2002, 2005, 2012) and others have challenged the notion of career decision-making and question whether all people do have the capacity and opportunity to choose a career. In advocating a situational approach based on an explanation of the role of broad macro-variables such as social class and labour market accessibility, Roberts (1977) claimed that "It is not choice but opportunity that governs the manner in which young people make their entry into employment" (p. 145), thus being one of the first to discuss the notion of opportunity structure (see also Astin, 1984; Lent et al., 1996, 2002). He observed that socioeconomic factors act as filters of relevant information in several areas, including the type of education received and information obtained, values held, observable role models, possible courses of action and level of encouragement. In 2005, he emphasised that "Young people's career opportunities depend heavily, although not exclusively, on their social class origins" (p. 136). A. Brown (2012) drew attention to how the middle class orientation of career development has resulted in a neglect of individuals engaged in low skilled work. Such views challenge career theorists to explore ways of ensuring equality of opportunity for all people so that they have the opportunity to make decisions, in addition to hypothesising about how career decisions are made.

In addition to specific sociological variables, theorists within this category have focused on status attainment, where the father's occupation and education are seen as a measure of status and are related to the occupational level of offspring (Blau & Duncan, 1967). Considerable research has supported this model, with Hotchkiss and Borow (1996) concluding that "few models in social research have held up so well under such extensive scrutiny" (p. 288). However, recent work has challenged the comprehensiveness of the model, in particular in relation to women and racial and ethnic groups. Structural theorists, including sociologists and economists, have

## CHAPTER 6

attempted to broaden our understanding of the influence of social systems and advocate focusing on a variety of features of the social structure which are related to individual career functioning. These structural features include structural features of schools, discrimination, occupational and job segregation, the supply and demand of labour, the size and location of employing organisations, and a range of other work and labour market factors. Johnson and Mortimer (2002) also emphasised the range of contexts in which individuals operate as relevant sociological variables for occupational attainment, including family, work and community. These contexts are important examples of points of intersection between psychological and sociological theories.

In sum, “The sociological framework for analyzing career paths of individuals considers the interplay between individual choices and constraints on those choices imposed by the operation of the labor market” (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996, p. 325). The structural emphasis reflects a broader consideration of social structural factors and complements the relevance of these factors on the individual choice processes emphasised by psychological theories. These structural theories have exposed reasons for the differential access to and outcomes from the labour market from a number of groups in society based on gender, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. The relevance of these structural issues has been incorporated to varying degrees into psychological theoretical models.

### THE RENEWED FOCUS ON SOCIAL CLASS IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

As indicated in the previous section, the dearth of work examining social class in career development has begun to change (Heppner & Jung, 2013). Juntunen, Ali and Pietrantonio (2013) asserted that social class and poverty has been less studied than other social identity factors such as gender, race and sexual orientation, a comment reiterated by Blustein, Coutinho and Murphy (2011). Following the arguments of other scholars (e.g., Blustein, 2001, 2006; Richardson, 1993, 2000; Roberts, 2005), our view is that the enculturation of vocational psychologists in the traditional positivist paradigm may inadvertently have blocked the openness to operationalise a sensitive view of class in research, theory, and practice. However work in focusing on social class has increased, perhaps stimulated by the significant global downturn of recent years, and the acknowledgement that poverty is experienced by those working as much as by those who are not (Caputo, 2007). A 2009 issue of the *Journal of Career Assessment* focused on social class, and special 2010 editions of the *Australian Journal of Career Development* (McIlveen, 2010) and the *Journal of Employment Counseling* (Chope, 2010) focused on social justice. Social class and poverty have a separate chapter in recent key works (S. D. Brown & Lent, 2013; Hartung & Subich, 2011). This section of the chapter will review the conceptual literature, and explore the theoretical contributions in this area.

A particular outcome of the recent discussions of social class has been conceptual and theoretical work. In particular, a clarification of terms, including a differentiation of the terms social class and socioeconomic status (Diemer & Ali,

2009; Liu, Ali, Soleck, Hopps, Dunston & Pickette, 2004; Lott & Bullock, 2007) has been made. Liu and colleagues (Liu et al., 2004; Liu & Ali, 2005) defined social class as the “individual’s position within an economic hierarchy that is determined by his or her income, educational level, and occupation” (Liu et al., 2004, p. 8). This economic position, in conjunction with the individual’s awareness of his or her positioning within this system, defines social class. In conceptualising social class, we draw on the *Social Class World View Model* and *Modern Classism Theory* (Liu et al., 2004), which posit that social class is a multifaceted psychological phenomenon, rather than a simplistic demographic and objectified descriptor based upon income, occupation, or geographic location. Liu et al. suggested that:

Consciousness is the degree to which an individual has an awareness that he or she belongs to a social class system and that this system plays out in his or her life; attitudes are those feelings, beliefs, attributions, and values related to social class as the individual understands it and the related congruent behaviors ...; and saliency is defined as the meaningfulness and significance of social class to the individual. (p. 104)

Socioeconomic status, in contrast, comprises objective indicators, such as education and occupation, and therefore is more readily measured. Blustein et al. (2011) have also emphasised the importance of acknowledging the connection between race and poverty in multiracial societies.

Johnson and Mortimer (2002) suggested that psychological and sociological approaches are converging. This assertion was supported by Vondracek and Hartung (2002) who have suggested that the life course approach usually associated with sociology and the life-span approach usually associated with psychology have more points in common than of difference and that recent theoretical formulations provide evidence of convergence. Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) emphasised the need for career development to develop more convergent positions to more effectively account for the complexity of human functioning. Certainly the career theory field has demonstrated a renewed focus on social class within the last decade, although authors have pointed out that many of the traditional theories have either not attended to social class at all, have been developed within different economic times and within a middle class bias, and have been too intrapersonally focused as opposed to developing a focus on the interaction between the self and context (Blustein, 2006; Blustein et al., 2011; Diemer & Ali, 2009; Juntunen et al., 2013).

The work of John Holland focused on the fit between the individual and work environment. However there is no specific attention to social class in his contribution. Although Super’s later work (1990) addressed workplace changes, such as career development possibly requiring the need to recycle careers, the developmental theorists also have not addressed social class in their career theories. L. S. Gottfredson is categorised within this book as a theory of developmental process (see chapter 1), however her work (L. S. Gottfredson, 2005) did explicitly address social class through the process of circumscription and social

class. She hypothesised that children rule out work “that is low in social standing” (p. 79) in their early to late teens. She acknowledged that the world view which informed this process would be different for working class young people than it is for middle class young people. In a study with middle and upper class adolescents, Lapour and Heppner (2009) reported that their participants constricted their career aspirations to keep them within their social class. Diemer (2009) examined the long term effect of sociopolitical development on occupational expectations and attainment of poor racial-ethnic minority young people. He reported that socio-political development raised the occupational expectations of these young people during high school and had increased their occupational attainment eight years after graduation.

Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) noted the criticism of traditional career development theories which do not take into account institutional and social opportunity constraints and emphasised that these criticisms are less applicable to Developmental Systems theory and the developmental-contextual perspective. They pointed to a rich volume of research guided by these theories and by life course sociological perspectives which have focused on examining the influence of these social policy and social structural constraints.

Both SLT and SCCT theories focus on context and therefore have focused more on social class within their formulations. Krumboltz (1979) specifically focused on genetic endowments, including gender, race and special abilities. He also considers family and labour market factors, as well as geography and educational environments. More recently Krumboltz (see chapter 4) developed happenstance learning theory (HLT) which emphasises the chance underpinning to much of an individual’s life (e.g., being born into a family of particular social class and perhaps in a particular geographic location, and even being born in a particular era, for example during an economic downturn or a major war). Chance has also been a factor in a number of other more recent theoretical formulations (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; Pryor & Bright, 2003a, b, 2011 – see chapters 4 and 9).

SCCT incorporates context within its theoretical formulation, focusing on the interplay between an individual’s intrapersonal factors (e.g., self-efficacy, outcome expectations) and his/her actions with the environment, however Juntunen et al. (2013) have commented that social class factors have not been subjected to very much research. Fouad and Fitzpatrick (2009) asserted that social class needs to be viewed as a continuous, multidimensional and contextualised variable, and note that within the process orientation of SCCT, social class may provide social mobility opportunities (see also the work of Diemer, 2009).

Blustein’s (2001, 2006) psychology of working perspective is a major theoretical development within the field of vocational psychology. It is discussed in detail in chapter 7 as a multidisciplinary integrative framework influenced by two meta-perspectives, social constructionism and the emancipatory communitarian perspective. The major focus in the present chapter is in relation to its contribution to our understanding of the influence of social class and poverty in career development. Blustein, Coutinho and Murphy (2011) reiterated that “traditional career choice and development theories need to be revised and

expanded to represent the work needs and experiences of people with little or no volition in their work lives (p. 217). Super's (1990) life-span life space career narrative does not apply to all workers, and as such a new definition of work is necessary. In alignment with the views of Richardson (1993, 2000), Blustein (2006) defined work as activities expended in order to earn a living and/or in carer roles. Individuals with volitional careers are often a small subset of those who work. Blustein (2006) emphasised that his psychology of working perspective aims to propose a much broader and more inclusive psychology of working, which includes those working outside the labour market (cf. Richardson, 1993, 2000, 2012a, b; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013) and nonworkers, and which attempts to address obstacles in 'career' development, such as poverty, classism, racism and other forms of inequity and oppression. Blustein et al. (2011) identified the role of social class "as a prominent factor that influences the construction of the vocational self and the capacity of the vocational self to be fully manifested in the world of work" (p. 218). Blustein and Fouad (2008) proposed the construct of "self-in-relation" to identify that individuals exist in and make decisions in dynamic and multiply layered contexts, or ecosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1995). In line with systems theory, these authors advance the notion of reciprocity, that is that individuals are impacted by, and in turn impact, their environments (see chapter 8 for a comprehensive discussion of systems theory).

#### THEORIES RELATED TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, Patton and McMahon highlighted the importance of disability as an influence in career development since the first publication of the Systems Theory Framework (McMahon & Patton, 1995, see chapter 9). We believed it was important to include this influence in its own right, rather than as a shadow to ability. However there has been a little attention to disability within the theoretical literature, with some mention in the work of L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz (SLTCDM, 1990, 1996) and Lent et al. (1994, 1996, 2002). Szymanski and Hershenson (1997, 2005) have developed an ecological model to incorporate disability into rehabilitation counselling approaches. Szymanski and Parker (2003) have outlined key issues for people with disabilities in the workplace, and have suggested strategies for career development practitioners. Interestingly, Patton and McIlveen (2009) noted that "disability as a career related issue was more evident in the literature of 2008 than in the past" (p. 122).

Ferrari, Nota and Soresi (2008) affirmed that individuals with an intellectual disability valued work as much as those without an intellectual disability, in particular as a means of survival and social connection. More recently, governments around the world have presented a renewed focus on social and labour market integration of people with disability (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD, 2010). This report noted that changes in the workplace, from manufacturing to service and knowledge industries, and from

low-skilled to high skilled jobs poses a particular risk to people with disability. The OECD report provided data which found that people with disability have lower levels of educational attainment in all 25 countries for which data was available. This issue is compounded by data which demonstrates that disability support tends to be passive (i.e., benefit payments) as opposed to active measures (i.e., employment support and rehabilitation) (OECD, 2010). The OECD report encourages governments to more actively demonstrate practice change to follow up policy rhetoric.

In 2011, the OECD extended its focus on disability to focus on mental health. The report acknowledged that there has not been an increasing incidence of mental illness, rather more public awareness has led to more cases being identified and disclosed. The report provided data which emphasised the cost of mental illness to labour supply, unemployment and productivity. Interestingly, there have been greater problems in the labour market for those with mental illness than previously. The OECD (2011b) report attributed this change to changing job requirements in the workplace – “Higher requirements on social skills and cognitive competences make it increasingly difficult for workers with mental ill-health to perform adequately” (p. 201).

These changes in labour market requirements for people within new broad definitions of disability pose challenges for career development theorists and practitioners – “Career guidance programming for persons with disabilities is especially relevant from a social justice point of view because inclusion into the world of work ... offers the opportunity to realise one’s basic human rights and human dignity” (Soresi, Nota, Ferrari, & Solberg, 2008, p. 414).

#### SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In the context of career theory’s long term neglect of and inappropriateness for so many groups, as discussed throughout this chapter, recent work has exhorted the vocational psychology field to return to its social justice roots as first conceived by Parsons (1909). Such work has included a focus in the *The Counseling Psychologist* which featured responses from a number of authors (e.g., F. H. Borgen, 2005) to a position paper on the topic by Blustein, McWhirter and Perry (2005) emphasising the importance of an emancipatory communitarian approach to our theorising, research and practice. This approach underpinned the work of Blustein (2006). In addition, it has been part of the work of Richardson since 1993, where she presented a theoretical framework that incorporated social justice into discussions of personal and social power. In 2000 Richardson asserted that vocational psychology needs to focus on ‘work’ rather than ‘career’ in order to support personal empowerment for all individuals rather than a continued focus on the economic and socio-political context. Richardson published a significant contribution in *The Counseling Psychologist* in 2012, extending her framework to change the role of vocational psychology from a narrow conception of career development to assisting individuals to construct valued and meaningful lives though broad contexts of work and relationship. Other featured work of the last

decade includes the *Handbook for social justice in counselling psychology* (Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Royiscar, & Israel, 2006) and *Critical reflections on career education and guidance: Promoting social justice within a global economy* (Irving & Malik, 2005). Other evidence of an increasing attention to this field include a special edition of the *Journal of Employment Counseling* (Chope, 2010) and the *Australian Journal of Career Development* (McIlveen, 2010). Further, McIlveen, Beccaria, du Preez, and Patton (2010) presented the value of autoethnography in highlighting a social justice critical consciousness in vocational psychology.

There have been a number of definitions of social justice, however we acknowledge that of O'Brien (2001) who referred to socially just practice as "actions that contribute to the advancement of society and advocate for equal access to resources for the marginalized or less fortunate individuals in society" (p. 66). McMahon, N. Arthur and Collins (2008a) emphasised the importance of human development and the role of career development practitioners in facilitating full access to resources and opportunities and assisting individuals reach their full potential. These authors identified the challenges in the field, advocating for theorists and practitioners to "develop a critical consciousness and reflect on the theories and socio-political systems influencing their work" (p. 25). These authors noted the recent advances that had been made, such as the inclusion of social justice competencies within international professional standards for career development practitioners (N. Arthur, 2005, 2008). The application of social justice in the work of career development practitioners has been investigated in Australia (McMahon, N. Arthur & Collins, 2008b) and Canada (N. Arthur, Collins, Marshall, & McMahon, 2013; N. Arthur, Collins, McMahon, & Marshall, 2009) through the use of the Social Justice and Career Development Survey (SJCDs; Collins, N. Arthur, & McMahon, 2006). McMahon et al. noted that in using this survey in a study with Australian career development practitioners, their participants demonstrated social justice values in their work. They also noted that practitioners reported a significant focus on individuals in social justice interventions and little systemic intervention, despite commenting that there were significant issues with the broader system such as organisations and governments. Further evidence of the important interface between the individual and the system is needed. Further, practitioners may need more skills in operating at the system level (N. Arthur et al., 2013; McMahon et al., 2008b). In including the various levels of systems relevant in an individual's career decision making, the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) has provided a map for intervention at the organisational level. Examples of such interventions using the STF have been demonstrated by McIlveen, Everton and Clarke (2005), McMahon (2007b) and McMahon et al. (2013).

## CONCLUSION

The work in this chapter on women, racial and ethnic groups, lesbians and gay men, children and adolescents, and social justice issues such as social class and

disability raises some important concerns for theory development generally. First, there is much heterogeneity within these groups, based on gender, socioeconomic status and other variables. For example, our discussion with ethnic groups did not focus on women although the work by A. Byars (2001) and Cook et al. (2002a) focuses on women of colour. Theoretical and empirical work is only beginning to explore the interaction between ethnicity and gender. For example, Bingham and Ward (1994) outlined five areas which they believe may affect the career development of women of colour. These included relevant information about the work place, factors related to family commitment, community factors such as language and role models, influence of socialisation, and impact of sexism and racism. These authors also highlighted the relevance of these factors to the career counselling process with women from ethnic groups (Bingham & Ward, 1996). Connections between discussions of social class and poverty and race have also been highlighted (Blustein et al., 2011).

Second, future theory development needs to expand on the specifics of individual differences and the structural and cultural factors which influence the theoretical and applied usefulness of career theories. Betz and Fitzgerald (1994) identified the following important individual difference categories: gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and sexual/affectional orientation and suggested three approaches by which this can occur. They emphasised the need to explore the applicability of a given theory to a particular group, rather like some of the work which has been done in this chapter. This notion echoes the “specific to universal” of theory development discussed by Arbona (1996) and Hesketh and Rounds (1995) under the ethnic group section in this chapter. It is also reflected in the comments made in our discussion on women’s career theory where we noted that theoretical and empirical work on the career behaviour of women has enhanced our knowledge of aspects of men’s career development.

Betz and Fitzgerald (1994) suggested that research needs to explore the relevance of individual difference and structural and cultural variables that affect the predictive value of a theory. They advocated the careful examination of each theory to analyse the roles that these structural and cultural factors play in conceptualisation and measurement of the important constructs of the theories.

As with career theory generally, the theoretical picture in this chapter of career development of women, racial and ethnic groups, lesbians and gay men, children and adolescents, people with disabilities, and individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds, is one in which no one theory presents a comprehensive theoretical rationale for, and explanation of, career behaviour. However, each one of them has addressed important individual variables, important social and environmental variables, and have started to address key aspects of cognitive process and issues related to the interaction of these variables and processes over time. Such a picture stresses the valuable nature of the theoretical contributions which have been made, and any further work within individual theoretical frameworks can only enhance their theoretical and practical worth.



However, there remains a need for an overarching framework in which the contribution of each of these theories can be noted by theorists, researchers and practitioners. Betz and Fitzgerald (1994) advocated that “structural and cultural factors (serve) as a focal point for both theoretical development and integration” (p. 114). The framework suggested by Betz and Fitzgerald (1994) emphasising individual difference and structural and cultural factors is a useful overarching framework for theory questioning and for guiding research, although it does not explicate the processes by which these factors interact.

This part of the book has presented a detailed and comprehensive review of career theories, noting the lack of coherence and integration among the major theories and emphasising issues which existing theories have failed to sufficiently address. It has highlighted the value of exploring career theory with a focus on particular groups, and of developing an overarching framework. Indeed it has identified a number of theories which have been suggested as possible metatheoretical frameworks (e.g., Blustein, 2006; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). In part two, we present an overarching framework for career theory based on systems theory. Prior to describing that framework (chapter 9), we detail other attempts at integration of career theory issues since 1990 (chapter 7), and explain key elements of systems theory (chapter 8).

# **PART 2**

## **THE MOVE TOWARDS INTEGRATION AND CONVERGENCE**

### **CHAPTER 7**

TOWARD INTEGRATION IN CAREER THEORY

### **CHAPTER 8**

SYSTEMS THEORY

### **CHAPTER 9**

A SYSTEMS THEORY FRAMEWORK OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

## TOWARD INTEGRATION IN CAREER THEORY

As previously indicated, reading in the field of career development could quickly become overwhelming for the uninitiated as they would be confronted with an array of theories addressing many issues and espousing a range of perspectives on career development. This array of theories may engender comments such as:

- “But which one is right?”
- “Who do I believe?”
- “How can I know what to think?”
- “They all sound good to me.”

Alternatively, a career practitioner may become an adherent of one theory at the expense of the others. Thus a practitioner’s response to the existing body of career literature may range on a continuum from broad understanding to confusion to narrow mindedness, as the links between theories traditionally have not been made clear.

Chapter 1 emphasised the segmented and disparate nature of much of career development theory, and the conceptual overlap between existing theories. Theorists have responded to this issue in a number of ways over many years. These responses have included proposals for integrative frameworks, and the adoption of elements of other theories into their own in an attempt to forge links between theories. In particular, the two major theoretical perspectives of Holland and Super have shown ongoing adjustments in this direction. For example, Holland (1985a) commented that his model works best when considered in context, and also acknowledged the impact of chance factors. In describing the development of his Archway Model, Super (1990, 1994) acknowledged the contribution of many writers including Roberts (1977) and Vondracek et al. (1986). In addition, both Holland and Super commented on the importance of Krumboltz’s (1994) learning theory in contributing to refinements in their work. Osipow (1983, p. 313) observed that “Most writers have chosen to emphasize the roles of one or two variables over those of others, but nearly all have acknowledged that many factors operate to influence career development”, a comment he reiterated in 1990. As a whole, the existing literature reflects the multifaceted base and complexity of the concept of career development. However, until recently, there has been only minimal effort to synthesise the theories.

In this chapter we will review the underlying epistemological base of vocational psychology and discuss how changes in worldviews are contributing to the linking of theoretical concepts. We will also look at the historical trend toward convergence of career theory, beginning with early approaches to further the integration of concepts in career development. A number of proposed bridging

## CHAPTER 7

frameworks which have been proffered will be explored. Finally, we will then trace the more recent moves toward theory convergence (since 1990) which have contributed to a renewed activity and vitality in the careers field. Indeed D. Brown (2002d) suggested that the “constructivists” and the “integrationists” are the key drivers in current theorising in career development, a view reiterated by Patton (2008).

### UNDERLYING WORLDVIEWS

The move toward convergence in career theory reflects disenchantment with its disunity. It is also reflective of a change in an underlying worldview, or root metaphor. This underlying worldview is a guide to all our theories of human behaviour, providing a perspective for our thinking and action as theorists and practitioners. A worldview has been described by Lyddon (1989) as serving the role of organising day to day experiential data. Pepper (1942) identified what he viewed as four competing root metaphors: mechanism, organicism, formism, and contextualism. Mechanism refers to the perspective which attempts to explain phenomena in mechanical terms. For example, such explanations suggest that we reason in direct linear routes from the general to the particular and vice versa, and that we focus on cause and effect. In this view, the world operates in much the same way as a machine. Problems arise when some part of the machine is malfunctioning. Formism is related to the process of forming phenomena into explainable structures. The organismic worldview sees human development as an orderly maturational unfolding process. It is the basis of prominent stage based models in developmental psychology, and in particular the work of Super and L. S. Gottfredson in vocational psychology. Any problems in the unfolding are thought to be related to the individual. For example, within the stage based models of career, the individual is seen as responsible for movement toward the next stage, and it is the individual who is believed to be “stuck” if s/he doesn’t move to the next stage. Collin and Young (1986) noted that “Career theories have so far been largely informed by the root metaphor of either organicism and/or mechanism” (p. 843).

However, *contextualism* is increasingly being embedded in perspectives in a number of fields in the social sciences, for example Collin and Young (1986), Young and Valach (2004) Valach and Young (2009), Savickas (2013a) and Vondracek et al. (1986) in career psychology, and Steenbarger (1991) in counselling psychology. A contextual worldview focuses on the world simply as ‘events’ in a unique historical context. These events occur ‘out there’; however, how they are viewed is linked to the perspective of each individual. Moreover, the contextualist worldview does not conceive development as maturational and unfolding in stages; rather, development is viewed as an ongoing process of interaction between the person and the environment. Within this process, random or chance events contribute to an open-ended unpredictable state of being. Indeed Savickas (2001) advocated that “Career development theory needs more complexity than provided by viewing maturation only as a progression of advances

and gains” (p. 301). An outcome of these elements of the contextualist worldview is an acknowledgement of the active nature of the individual as a self-building and self-renewing ‘self-organising system’ (D. Ford, 1987), as opposed to a passive organism at the whim of maturational and developmental stages and/or environmental forces. Career work within the contextualist worldview focuses on individuals interacting with their social and environmental contexts. Career development is not viewed as an intraindividual developmental process. In describing their contextual action theory of career, Young and Valach (2004) emphasised that “our approach is grounded on cultural/contextual rather than developmental psychology ... the contextual action theory explicates social perspectives that have the effect of moving it beyond traditional career approaches and linking it directly to constructionism” (p. 501).

The contextualist worldview is reflected in the constructivist epistemology as opposed to the traditional objectivist or positivist epistemology. To explain these two positions, positivists emphasise rationality based on an objective value free knowledge; objectivity over subjectivity, facts over feelings. Constructivists argue against the possibility of absolute truth. However, to say that the constructivist approach is the opposite would be to oversimplify. Constructivism is directly derived from the contextualist worldview in that the ‘reality’ of world events is seen as constructed from the inside out by the individual (that is, through the individual’s own thinking and processing). These constructions are based on individual cognitions in relation with perspectives formed from person-environment interactions. “They are both individual and interactional, creating order for the person and guiding interactions with the environment” (Steenbarger, 1991, p. 291). Constructivism therefore views the person as an open system, constantly interacting with the environment, seeking stability through ongoing change. The emphasis is on the process, not on an outcome; there is no completion of a stage and arrival at the next stage as in stage based views of human development. Mahoney and Lyddon (1988) emphasised the change and stability notion as follows: “Embedded with self-change is self-stability – we are all changing all the time and simultaneously remaining the same” (p. 209).

While there are significant commonalities between constructivism and social constructionism (Young & Collin, 2004), the increasing focus on this epistemology in career theories (McIlveen & Schultheiss, 2012) warrants a focused discussion. Young and Collin (2004) distinguished the two epistemologies as follows: constructivism assumes the individual mind as the basis for the construction of knowledge, while the construction of knowledge is viewed as being on the basis of social processes for social constructionism. Guichard (2009) distinguished these perspectives by referring to them as psychological constructivism and social constructionism. Young and Popadiuk (2012) commented that “At one level it appears to be a matter of emphasis because for both the constructivists and the social constructionists individual and social processes are important” (p. 10). Young and Popadiuk identified five approaches which their authors have identified as being derived from constructivist/social constructionist and provided a

discussion about differences/similarities between them. These approaches included narrative, relational, systems theory, cultural and contextual action theory.

While there is ongoing discussion in different disciplines about the ‘correctness’ of each of these ways of viewing the world, it is clear that there is no ‘right’ way. Savickas (1995) emphasised the divisions which exist about which is the ‘right’ epistemology, and presents an illustrative outline of the historical precursors to the philosophies of science which have informed the development of career theory. He reasserted the view that “vocational psychologists are being challenged to revise their core philosophy of science and to reform their field into an interpretive discipline” (p. 18). As in other disciplines (e.g., social work, see Franklin & Nurius, 1996), a number of authors have developed theoretical and research approaches which can be grouped under the postmodern or constructivist perspective (Savickas, 2000a). Each of these approaches may focus on different aspects, and often have different names (e.g., perspectivism, interpretivism, constructivism, social constructionism), however they are all derived from a similar meta-theoretical paradigm or worldview. These approaches include the work on hermeneutical perspectives in career theory (Collin & Young, 1988; Young & Collin, 1988) and in research (Young & Collin, 1992). Hermeneutical approaches focus on bringing together the meaning or underlying coherence of, in this case, an individual’s career, or the career experiences of a group of individuals. The career story is the text to be interpreted for what meaning we can glean from it. Other approaches include Peavy’s (1992, 1997, 2004) work on constructivism in career counselling, and Young and W. A. Borgen (1990) on subjective method in the study of careers. Cohen et al. (2004) also outlined a social constructionist approach to researching careers. L. Cochran’s (1997) narrative approach to counselling emphasises meaning-making, personal development and identity through a focus on life history and purpose. The constructivist influence in career counselling is evident in contributions to the publications by McMahon and Patton (2006a) and McMahon and M. Watson (2011). In addition, the social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent et al., 1994) has been derived directly from assumptions of constructivism, although as D. Brown (2002d) asserted, its empirical support continues to be derived from research grounded in logical positivism. Savickas (2002, 2005) has outlined his career construction theory (see chapter 3 for a more detailed description) which addressed “how the career world is made through personal constructivism and social constructionism” (2005, p. 43), while Blustein, et al. (2004) and Valach and Young (2009) have emphasised relational ontology and social constructionism respectively. More recently, these influences have been reflected in new paradigms such as life designing (Savickas et al., 2009) and self-constructing (Guichard, 2009).

Following the emphasis on psychoanalytic and behavioural theories, constructivism has been acknowledged as the third major theoretical development in cognitive science (Mahoney & Patterson, 1992), a development which emphasises human agency in individuals’ construing and shaping their experiences. It is this feature which distinguishes this third force from the earlier two and which is now an acknowledged major influence of human development

theory and practice. Its specific influence in the development of career theory is evident in our earlier discussion of career theories. Indeed Amundson (2003b) provided the following summary of career theory: “our paradigm has shifted away from stability, order, uniformity and equilibrium towards a new order of instability, disorder, disequilibrium, and non-linear relationships where small inputs trigger major effects” (p. 91).

Patton (2008) noted that “It is clear that the developing worldview of contextualism, and the development of constructivism in cognitive psychology, have been important influences in the move toward the integration and convergence of career theories” (p. 143). However, before further developing the influence of the root metaphor of contextualism, and the specific influence of constructivist and social constructionist approaches, we will explore earlier attempts at integration. In doing this, we will chart the historical process of integration in career psychology.

#### STAGES IN INTEGRATION AND CONVERGENCE

Savickas (1995) discussed three stages a science follows in its transition from “early to late science” (p. 6). Early beginnings tend to encourage the development of different phenomena, with scientists intending to emphasise the uniqueness of their own theory or approach. This can be seen in the early development of career theories, with each focused on different aspects of career behaviour, or different parts of the “map” (Krumboltz, 1994). During the second stage, relationships between theories and approaches are acknowledged and scientists attempt to integrate diversity and eliminate the inevitable conceptual overlap. During this stage, three phases may be recognised: rapprochement, convergence, and bridging. Rapprochement involves a cessation of competition and an introduction of a process of collaboration, within which researchers are able to work together for commonalities across theories. “As rapprochement strengthens, the goal for knowledge production broadens to include not just the discovery of the novel but the interrelation, organization, and simplification of existing knowledge” (Savickas, 1995, p. 5). This rapprochement is evident in the acknowledgment of the influence of context in refinements of Super (1980, 1990) and in Holland’s (1985a) acknowledgment of the developmental nature of career.

Following rapprochement, convergence can emerge, which involves development of a common language for describing theoretical constructs. After completing chapters 2 through 5, the reader will be aware that similar constructs are described using different language, and that theorists remain fixed to subtle distinctions. For example, Patton and McMahon (1999, 2006a) emphasised the subtle difference afforded through use of the term recursiveness over triadic reciprocity used in the SCCT (Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002). Earlier in this book, we noted the similarity between Krumboltz’s (1994) self-observation generalisation and Super’s (1990) discussion of self-concept. However it is also clear that theorists have chosen to share language rather than confuse their work with additional terms. For example, Astin (1984) referred to opportunity structure,

a construct also referred to by Roberts (1977), and both Lent et al. (1994) and Vondracek et al. (1986) have adopted the term contextual affordance.

The third phase toward theoretical unification involves bridging. This phase requires work across theories, whereby key aspects of the existing theoretical base are organised. Savickas (1995) emphasised the importance of maintaining the integrity of existing theories as well as the growth toward unification. Examples of bridging frameworks will be discussed later in this chapter.

Finally, unification involves a synthesis which uses a new “superordinate umbrella, coherent theoretical gestalt, metatheoretical framework or conceptually superior theory” (Beitman, Goldfried, & Norcross, 1989, p. 139). The Systems Theory Framework which we have developed (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) and which we detail further in chapter 9 is an example of this process. Savickas’ (2005) use of “social constructionism as a metatheory with which to reconceptualize central concepts of vocational development theory” (p. 42) is also an example of this process.

In addition to integration and convergence within the career development and vocational psychology field, it is evident that incorporation of theories from other fields is an important part of the process. Career theory has already incorporated theories from cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, sociology, counselling psychology to name a few. In describing the development of the developmental-contextual framework, Vondracek (in Vondracek & Porfeli, 2008) commented that vocational development theories were not connected to categorisations of mainstream psychologists.

It was not cognition, learning, motivation, emotion, personality, social or biological development, although all of them clearly play a role in vocational development. ... Our intent in presenting the developmental-contextual framework was straight forward: We wanted to precipitate the abandonment of simplistic notions of career development in favour of a developmental-contextual and life-span perspective, and we wanted to stimulate greater interest in vocational and career development research in the broad community of social and behavioural scientists. (p. 211)

In the development of Developmental Systems Theory, Ford and Lerner (1992) noted that there is a convergence in various fields such as evolutionary and developmental biology, genetics, learning and psychological and behavioural development around the notion that there are three basic, change related processes in human development: stability, maintenance, incremental change and transformational change (p. 151). In emphasising the value of the conceptualisation of developmental science, Lerner (2008) further emphasised that

Across the last 40 years, the study of the human life span has been transformed from a field framed by a unidisciplinary, developmental psychological conception of change to one that is framed by a developmental science model, that is, a multidisciplinary, integrative approach to understanding the breadth of the course of human life. (p. 71)



More recently Lerner (2011) emphasised that developmental science is “at its cutting edge ... framed by a relational metatheory ... and a basic and applied scholarship that conceives of developmental structures within the relational developmental system” (p. 35).

Similarly, a number of authors have emphasised the importance of incorporating relational theory (Blustein, 2011; Blustein et al., 2004), cultural theory (Schultheiss, 2007, 2013) and dialogical theory (McIlveen, 2007b, 2012; McIlveen & Patton, 2007a) into career theories. Collin and Patton (2009b) structured an edited book which encouraged authors from vocational psychological and organisational backgrounds to examine ways to integrate these perspectives with career theory and practice.

Attempts at integration of career theory constructs have been located from as early as the 1950s. These have included attempts at interdisciplinary integrative frameworks, theorists’ integration of elements of others’ theories into their own, and development of new theories which attempt to build on previous theories. Examples of each of these will be presented, with an indication of whether they are representative of rapprochement, convergence, or bridging. A number of theoretical frameworks which have been suggested as suitable bridging frameworks in career theory will then be outlined.

#### INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORKS

The interdisciplinary nature of contributions to career development theory has meant that writers have been attempting to construct integrative conceptual frameworks for some time. In this instance, a conceptual framework is seen as an umbrella concept for an overall theoretical field which is explained by a number of specific limited theories. “Conceptual frameworks do not usually have determinable empirical consequences, although their component models (limited to theories) typically contain statements about reality which may be open to empirical test” (Warr, 1980, p. 161). In this section, we will review five theoretical integrative frameworks. These include the following:

- Blau, Gustad, Jessor, Parnes, and Wilcock (1956);
- R. Campbell (1969);
- Van Maanen and Schein (1977);
- Hesketh (1985);
- Pryor (1985a); and
- Sonnenfeld and Kotter (1982).

The first framework that we identified was that proposed by Blau, Gustad, Jessor, Parnes, and Wilcock in 1956. These authors recognised the importance of contributions from psychology, economics and sociology in understanding career choice, and developed an inclusive conceptual framework. They provided a comprehensive outline of relevant schema, drawn from the three disciplines, which are relevant to the process of career choice. These were comprehensive and included genetic endowments, physical conditions, sociopsychological attributes, social structure, personality development, historical change, and socioeconomic

organisation. While acknowledging the value of this schema, the authors noted that little is known about the relationships between them.

Blau et al.'s (1956) work was important for its inclusion of psychological and contextual antecedents in career choice. Although it stopped short in identifying the nature of the relationships between the variables, it highlighted the importance of understanding these relationships – “The identification of isolated determinants, however, cannot explain occupational choice ... the exact relationships between which have to be determined by empirical research before a systematic theory can be developed” (p. 532). Blau et al. (1956) did not propose that their framework was a theory, but rather was a conceptual framework. While it was not intended to integrate existing theories, it did attempt to integrate crucial antecedent factors in occupational choice. It is also interesting to note that at this early stage in the development of career development models that the importance of decision making on more than one occasion, and the relevance of earlier choices to future choices, was acknowledged – “A series of successive choice periods must be successively analyzed to show how earlier decisions limit or extend the range of future choices. This requires the repeated application of the schema at crucial stages in the individual's development” (p. 541).

R. Campbell (1969) also faced the problem of identifying a comprehensive framework for career behaviour. He noted that the parameters identified in the literature crossed discipline boundaries and the resultant contributions from different disciplines created a segmental picture. In searching for a “broad umbrella to cover the dimensions of vocational behavior” (p. 22), he proposed the adaptation of the conceptual framework of human ecology which he termed “vocational ecology ... the study of man as he adjusts to his vocational environment which includes the interrelated influences of sociological, psychological and economic forces” (p. 22). Similar to Blau et al. (1956), R. Campbell's identification of contextual factors as relevant to career choice was an important addition to writings in the field. However, the suggestion that individuals adjust to these contextual factors allows little room for individual self-determination.

Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) work represented an important precursor to integration between the psychological differential, developmental and organisational theorising about career development, as well as sociological theorising. These authors noted how the two frames of reference “have remained remarkably independent” (p. 44) and proceeded to develop an interdisciplinary framework. Their interactional schema was underpinned by the importance of perceiving career development in its total context, within the lifespan of each individual. They depicted their schema as a cube, which “attempts to show the simultaneous development of the three major areas that we believe are in continual interaction throughout the lifecycle – self, family, and work” (p. 65). The three dimensions were labelled as the stages of life development, the stages of career development, and the stages of family development. Van Maanen and Schein viewed each of these as critical contexts in individual career behaviour, and that “any given cell in the cube can be thought of as a particular set of forces acting on the individual; the forces derive from a particular stage of self, family and career

development” (p. 65). These authors also stressed the importance of cultural and biological forces in influencing development. Career anchors, defined by the authors as “a syndrome of talents, motives, values and attitudes that provide direction and coherence to a person’s career” (p. 76) were identified by the authors as representing the interactions between variables highlighted in the career cube.

These first three frameworks seem to reflect a merging of the phases discussed earlier in this chapter. They are representative of bridging frameworks, although aspects of their construction are external to the theoretical field. Each of these frameworks was attempting to link relevant constructs in career development, as opposed to relevant theories. The work of Van Maanen and Schein (1977) extended this approach further and aimed to broadly link the three psychological theoretical bases of career and sociological bases.

The merging of theoretical constructs can be seen as an example of bridging. The first of the following two frameworks is an example of exploring one theory as a base for a broader theoretical framework. The second framework is an example of the merging of two theories.

In searching for a framework for vocational psychology, Hesketh (1985) emphasised the complexity of career behaviour and the improbability of any one theory being able to adequately explain it. She advocated the generation of empirically testable specific theories, or microtheories, and the development of a conceptual framework that provided a structure to integrate findings from research. She identified the following three themes which underlie existing theory in vocational psychology: intervening factors; the role of the individual (how active the individual is); and the degree of emphasis on content or process. She then examined the theory of work adjustment in relation to these themes as a possible starting point for an integrative framework. Her review of work adjustment theory led her to call for a greater integration of the content and process of career development in theoretical work. She also highlighted the “dynamic active and reactive modes on the part of individuals and organisations” (p. 28), but acknowledged the need for more research into the nature of these interactions. While applauding the work adjustment model for its parsimony in providing a framework for important issues in individuals’ career behaviour, she also identified some shortcomings. Despite the simplicity of this attempt to begin an integrative framework, it is clear that the need for such a framework remains. More recently, the work adjustment theory has also been suggested as a possible base for a bridging framework; this will be discussed later in this chapter.

Also in 1985, Pryor (1985a) proposed what he termed a composite theory of career development and choice. He commented on the separateness of theorising in vocational psychology from other fields in psychology, emphasising that “Dividing the person up into bits and theorising separately about each piece is a fundamental denial of the totality of the human being ...” (p. 226). Krumboltz’s (1979) early attempts to apply social learning theory to career decision-making was seen as a useful addition to career theory, although Pryor criticised its early articulation on two points: an inadequate conceptualisation of self, and a neglect of developmental factors. He therefore attempted to integrate this theory with L. S. Gottfredson’s

(1981) circumscription and compromise theory to formulate a “composite theory”. While also acknowledging limitations in L. S. Gottfredson’s theory (Pryor, 1985b), Pryor (1985a) proposed that an integration of the two theoretical formulations would give a more complete account of career development and choice.

Rather than focus on individual theories, or combinations of two theories, Sonnenfeld and Kotter (1982) attempted a far more expansive attempt at integration. Similar to the structure in part one of this book, they identified four waves in the evolution of career theory:

- the social structure approach, where career outcomes were set from birth as a result of parent’s social class;
- the relationship of individual traits to career choice;
- a focus on the stages of individuals’ careers; and
- the lifecycle approach, where the focus was on the interrelationships between career and other areas of an individual’s life across the life span.

The increasing dynamic nature of career theory, and the increasing number and array of variables relevant to career choice, was inevitably contributing to a picture of considerable complexity. Sonnenfeld and Kotter (1982) therefore advocated a fifth approach, an attempt to integrate all factors and show how they contribute to a bigger picture. They developed a two dimensional model, with lifespace on one axis and time on another, to illustrate the interaction between occupational, personal and family factors in career development. Nine major sets of variables operating within the two axes included educational environment, the individual’s personality, childhood family environment, adult family/nonwork history, adult development history, work history, current work situation, the individual’s current perspective, and current family/nonwork situation. While the model serves an illustrative purpose, it offers little in the way of theoretical underpinnings. Further, its assumption of a linear maturation of career theory based on an organismic worldview (Lyddon, 1989; Pepper, 1942) has also been criticised (Collin & Young, 1986).

#### THEORISTS’ MODIFICATION OF THEORIES AND NEW THEORIES

The narrow nature of the traditional base for individual career development theories and their failure to take into account broader contextual influences was discussed in chapter 1. As early as 1965, Lyon warned that “current theories of career development will be soon obsolete if they fail to take the social context into their formulations” (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996, p. 328). More recently, this issue of including context has been addressed by career development theorists and is another one of the early indications of a move toward theory integration.

Many authors have suggested the need to focus on contextual factors (Bailyn, 1989; Blustein, 2006; Collin & Young, 1986; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; Poole, 1992; Poole et al., 1991) and have proffered contextual models (Vondracek et al., 1986). The focus on context has expanded significantly in recent years (see chapter 6 and the discussion on social class, and the discussions in chapters 3 and 4). Several writers have proposed a rationale for a contextual model, with various

suggestions, inclusions and focii. For example, the work of Van Maanen and Schein discussed previously could be included here, Bailyn (1989) proposed that the immediate context of work and the context of time need to be included in studying careers, and Schein (1984) suggested that cultural influences on the concept and importance of career is also an important contextual influence which impacts on our understanding of career development.

In acknowledging changing labour markets, government policies, and ongoing unemployment, Poole (1992) reinforced the importance of recognising the context of change as “embedded in an inextricably linked, interdependent field of internal and external influences” (p. 234). She then supported the development of a contextualist framework that would link individual development to opportunities and constraints in different time periods, “in which individual career planning and career attainment is conceived as a dynamic and interactive process between developing individuals and the changing contexts in which their lives are lived, negotiated, and constructed” (Poole et al., 1991).

Existing theories do take account of the social, economic and environmental context, with Super’s (1990) reality testing, Holland’s (1985a) focus on personality and work environments, and the social learning theorist’s attention to individual and environment (Krumboltz, 1979; L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990). However none of these theories develops and conceptualises the nature of these influences which act as a contextual medium for individual career decision-making.

Moves toward convergence in theories of career development can also be seen in the attempts to integrate these perspectives of context, as well as life-span and social systems, into career development theory. As Jepsen (1992, p. 101) commented, “greater attention is being given to people of all ages, stages and cultures” thus addressing some of the criticisms of early theory. This convergence indicates that “there can be little doubt about career being embedded in, and influenced by, historical, cultural and social contexts” (Jepsen, 1992, p. 115). The most significant of these attempts include Super’s (1990, 1992) life-span life-space approach, L. S. Gottfredson’s (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005) theory of occupational aspirations, Vondracek et al.’s (1986) developmental-contextual approach and Developmental Systems Theory (DST; D. Ford & Lerner, 1992). Each of these will be discussed in turn as illustrative attempts of theory integration.

It is interesting that one of the pioneers of career development theory, Super, made a significant attempt at theory integration, or as Savickas (1995) suggested, *rapprochement*. Super had often referred to his theory as segmental as he focused on specific constructs such as self-concept, career maturity, and work values. In a 1992 article entitled “Toward a comprehensive theory of career development”, he acknowledged the need for “Not two, but three ...” (p. 59) models to explain career development. These included the life-span, life-space model depicted in the Rainbow, and the determinant/choice model depicted in the Archway (see chapter 3). Super indicated that these two models also need a decision making model to form an integrated theoretical approach. Finally, he noted that there are three elements of career development which need integration for a unified theory to develop, thereby naming those theories whose components were crucial to any

integrated career theory. These included trait and factor theories (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Holland, 1985a), his own developmental theory (Super, 1990); and the social learning theory of career-decision making (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990). Super (1994) referred to the multiplicities inherent in his own theory claiming that "... each researcher and practitioner now has a choice between Vondracek's complexity, Holland's simplicity and this (Super's) multiplicity of simplicities" (p. 72). Savickas (1997a) suggested that Super's construct of adaptability could be a useful bridge between the individual differences, developmental, self and contextual segments in life-span life-space theory. More recently, Savickas (2013b) commented that he believed that career construction theory tied the segments together.

In 2001, Savickas suggested that career maturity be removed from the developmental theory and updated with career choice readiness, "a heuristic stage-specific function-centred construct and a noteworthy contribution to life-span developmental psychology" (p. 304). He further updated the life-span life-space aspect of Super's developmental theory through the development of an integration of theoretical constructs from personality, developmental and motivational psychology. In doing so he provided an example of theory integration through drawing from different areas of psychology. His proposition of a comprehensive model of careers included four propositions, with the first being "the emergence of the RIASEC structure of personality as a precondition for adaptation" (p. 314), noting that personality traits "frame how adaptation takes place" and "gives the individual a sense of continuity and coherence, as well as provide coping processes to master developmental changes and to adapt flexibly to changing circumstances" (p. 314). The second proposition suggested that a secondary system of self-regulation emerges with personality self-organisation, and that these self-regulatory mechanisms mediate adaptation. Career narratives were the third proposition, while the fourth proposition "seeks to specify the actual processes of continuity and change in career adaptation" (p. 315) through the adoption of the SOC (selective optimisation and compensation) model proffered by Baltes and Baltes (1990). Savickas' (2001) work is an example of the merging of the stages of integration and convergence identified by his earlier work (1995). He has drawn from the work of a number of career development theorists, including Super, Holland, and Vondracek et al. (1986), as well as theorists from personality (McAdams, 1995) and life-span developmental theory (Baltes & Baltes). This work is also an example of rapprochement and bridging as Savickas has developed work from different theoretical fields and attempted to redevelop constructs within a changing context of and understanding about career development.

Another example of rapprochement is in the work of L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 2002, 2005) who "integrates a social systems perspective with the more psychological approaches" (1981, p. 546). In doing so, L. S. Gottfredson's theory "accepts the fundamental importance of self-concept in vocational development, that people seek jobs compatible with their images of themselves. Social class, intelligence and sex are seen as important determinants of both self-concepts and the types of compromises people must make" (1981, p. 546). As well as

acknowledging many influences on career development, L. S. Gottfredson (1981) identified four stages through which young people pass, thereby focusing on time. These stages, orientation to size and power, orientation to sex roles, orientation to social valuation, and orientation to internal, unique self also illustrate an emphasis on the individual in context. As indicated in chapter 6, L. S. Gottfredson (1986) also proposed an “at risk” framework in which she identified a wide range of possible influences on career development. Thus, in her work, L. S. Gottfredson acknowledged the importance of the concepts of time and context to career development, and illustrated the integration of concepts from different disciplines, such as sociology and psychology.

The concepts of time and context are also recognised in the developmental-contextual approach of Vondracek et al. (1986). These authors stressed that their approach to career development is not a theory but a general conceptual model. First, they emphasised that career development lies firmly within the field of human development, and as such the focus of lifespan development is key. Second, they contended that in order to understand career behaviour it is essential to view the contextual (socioeconomic and cultural) influences on career, and their ever changing nature. Finally, an important concept within the model is the embeddedness of human life within multiple levels of analysis, for example biological, individual-psychological, organisational, social, cultural, historical levels, and the ongoing dynamic interactions between the individual and these areas of context. According to this approach career development is facilitated by the interplay between an active organism and an ever changing environment. This approach is an example of *rapprochement*, and perhaps convergence, as similarities with existing theoretical offerings are recognised and links between disciplines and theories are developed.

#### BRIDGING FRAMEWORKS

Most writers acknowledge that a conceptual tool for bridging theories, or an overarching framework, needs to be identified and developed. Savickas (1995) identified six bridging frameworks which have been proposed as having the potential to be developed as bridging frameworks for career theories:

- developmental-contextualism;
- learning theory;
- person-environment transaction;
- work adjustment theory;
- Developmental Systems Theory; and
- systems theory.

In 2006, we added to this list the social cognitive career theory, contextual action theory (Young and colleagues), and Savickas’ (2005, 2013a) use of social constructionism as a metatheory in career construction theory. We will review each of these frameworks briefly. For this 2014 edition, we add Blustein’s (2006, 2011) integrative relationship theory of working.

*Developmental-Contextualism*

The metatheoretical framework of Vondracek et al. (1986) was presented in detail in chapter 4. It was also discussed earlier in this chapter as an example of a model developed on the basis of merging new ideas from across disciplines. In the context of the present section, it is important to focus on the developmental-contextualist perspective as being derived from both the developmental organic perspective and the contextualist perspective. Vondracek et al. (1986) acknowledged two limitations of pure contextualism in their theoretical formulation. First, this worldview sees the components of life as totally dispersive. They believe that development must be more than mere change, and that “a worldview that stresses only the dispersive, chaotic, and disorganized character of life would not readily lend itself to a theory of development” (p. 24). Hence these authors combined two perspectives in their formulation of developmental contextualism. Second, contextualism emphasises the current event, stressing the importance of the relation between the elements. A developmental analysis offered by these authors emphasises the changes that exist in the relation among elements over time.

Vondracek et al. (1986) asserted that the developmental-contextual framework synthesised two key ideas from contextualism and organicism, “that contextual change is probabilistic in nature, and that development proceeds according to the organism’s activity” (p. 32). Developmental-contextualism therefore emphasises ongoing change both within the organism and within the environment, and in the interaction between the two. Thus the perspective emphasises change and dynamic interaction. Further it acknowledges the internal stability of the organism, and the dual nature of influence between the organism and the context. “Dynamic interaction of the developing individual with various context was presented as the paradigm that could, for the first time, adequately account for the complexity of occupational careers, their antecedents, their unfolding, and their consequences” (Vondracek & Porfeli, 2008, p. 211).

Further to the interaction between the individual and the environment, Vondracek et al. (1986) emphasised the self-determination and agency of the individual. The developmental-contextual approach holds that the environment engenders chaotic and reflexive changes in an individual’s behaviour, however it also emphasises that the environment is facilitated or constrained by the unique characteristics of the individual. Within the model, the individual is an active organism operating in a constantly changing environment, hence the concept of dynamic interaction. An individual’s career development is a reflection of the continuous interplay of person and context at all possible levels. Thus this approach has the capacity to include elements of content and process.

More recently, Vondracek and Porfeli (2002a) have emphasised the potential for an integration of lifespan psychological and sociological life course approaches to our understanding of career development, in children (Hartung et al., 2005) and adults (Vondracek & Porfeli, 2002b). As with the work by Savickas (2001), Vondracek and his colleagues have drawn heavily on life-span development theory (Baltes, 1997; Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Baltes et al., 1998) to present their discussion



of an updated integrated perspective. Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) have noted that theoretical formulations of systems theory have added to the developmental-contextualism's capacity to address processes of development.

### *Learning Theory*

Most theorists have championed learning theory as being crucial to any integrated theory as it is such an important underpinning of individual behaviour. For example, Holland (1994) suggested that "The most promising integration would be to insert the Krumboltz learning theory into every other vocational theory" (p. 45). Earlier frameworks (e.g., Pryor, 1985a) also highlighted the value of merging learning theory with other theories. Super (1990) referred to learning theory as the cement that bonded the segments of his archway, and Subich and K. M. Taylor (1994) referred to it as "a central glue in explaining the learning processes underlying other career theories' core constructs" (p. 171). However, Savickas (1995) asserted that its value lies more in providing a more fine grained analysis of existing constructs than in providing a framework for an overarching intertheory analysis.

### *Person-environment Transaction*

A number of authors have identified person-environment (P-E) transaction as a central unifying principle for converging theories (Rounds & Hesketh, 1994; Spokane, 1994; Walsh & Chartrand, 1994). However, these authors also acknowledged that P-E is defined differently across related theories and that this definition needs to be sharpened before any convergence work is undertaken. Interestingly Savickas (2002) drew on the distinction of person and environment transaction in structuring aspects of his discussion of a developmental theory of vocational behaviour. The more recent discussions about person-in-context (M. Ford, 1992; Hartung & Subich, 2011) have considerably advanced the traditional person-environment notion.

### *Theory of Work Adjustment*

The theory of work adjustment (TWA) was conceived as useful in integration of career theory as early as 1985 (see Hesketh, 1985 earlier in this chapter). As Dawis (1994) stated, TWA was initially constructed to integrate several related concepts from different areas in psychology: ability, reinforcement, satisfaction, and person-environment correspondence. As such, it was initially constructed as an early example of convergence. Dawis (1994) illustrated the already strong correspondence between TWA and Holland's (1985a) theory. The only major difference is the focus of Holland's work on career choice and of TWA on work adjustment. As both TWA and Krumboltz's (1994) theory are closely based on learning theory, there are already points of convergence. Dawis (1997) noted that Roe's theory of personality development and career choice could be productively

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incorporated into the Theory of Work Adjustment “to yield hypotheses about the functioning of need structures in organizational settings and the development of need structures as a result of early childhood experience” (p. 295).

### *Developmental Systems Theory*

Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) describe the origins of the Developmental Systems Theory as follows: “Developmental Systems Theory (D. Ford & Lerner, 1992) actually emerged as a synthesis of developmental-contextualism and D. Ford’s (1987) seminal work describing the Living Systems Framework that characterises humans as self-constructing living systems” (p. 212). This framework furthers our understanding from the description of human behaviour to an understanding of the underlying processes – the “how and why of the behaviors that determine the work lives of individuals” (Vondracek & Kawasaki, 1995, p. 118). Vondracek and Kawasaki illustrated the value of both Developmental Systems Theory and Motivational Systems Theory (MST; M. Ford, 1992) to furthering our understanding of adult career development. In particular, Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) asserted that the DST is a significant advance over the developmental-contextual framework as it includes a process model that includes content, organisation and the dynamics of the developing person, addressing the how of development “by describing and explaining the basic change processes and dynamics that are capable of producing the incredible diversity of developmental outcomes in humans” (p. 215). Indeed these authors asserted that “The framework is capable, in principle, of accounting for every aspect of human functioning” (p. 216). A further elaboration of developmental systems theories more generally, and their contribution to career development, will be included in chapter 8.

### *Systems Theory*

The potential of the Living Systems Framework (LSF) of D. Ford (1987) as an overall theoretical framework has been illustrated by Krumboltz and Nichols (1990). These authors applied the LSF to provide an inclusive “map” for specific career decision-making frameworks. The value of the framework as identified by these authors is its ability to integrate all of the determinants of human development, and specifically career choice and career development. Its development to date has been in providing a specific focus for the four governing functions in decision making: information processing and storage, directive, regulatory and control processes which can be used in understanding career decision-making in concert with the knowledge of their interrelatedness with other relevant subsystems. Krumboltz and Nichols (1990) commented that “Although the LSF does not specify the full complexity of human decision making, it provides us with a map of a larger area than we generally consider in current theories of career behavior” (p. 189). Its explication to date, however, introduces this larger area into career behaviour without a clear explanation of its links. These authors

asserted that existing career theories could be embedded within the overall Living Systems Framework, however this suggestion has not been developed further.

Both Blustein (1994) and Bordin (1994) acknowledged the value of systems theory as a basis for a convergence framework. In particular, these authors drew from the work of the family systems movement (Bowen, 1978). Bordin suggested that in order to effect synthesis of career theories, a broader perspective, such as the family system, “can encompass all theories” (p. 61). More recently, the work of Solberg, Howard, Blustein, and Close (2002) drew on concepts derived from systems theory and developmental contextualism in developing the school to work to life (STWL) program. This program acknowledges the multiple relevant contexts in individual development across the life span, the dynamic interaction between them, and the importance of intervening in systems to enable change.

The Systems Theory Framework (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1997, 1999, 2006a, b) was the first attempt to comprehensively present a metatheoretical framework constructed using systems theory. The STF is not a theory of career development; although it is often misread and therefore misrepresented as such (see Pryor & Bright, 2011). These authors were critical of the STF claiming “... the problem with the STF is that it is more framework than theory” (p.22), further suggesting it is “content without processes” despite its specific emphasis on both content and process and the importance of recursiveness as a core process element within systems theory and the STF. The STF has been analysed by Young and Popadiuk (2012) within the categories of Main principles, Epistemology, Axiology, Rhetoric, Research and Practice. It is recognised as a metatheoretical perspective which has made strong contributions to the field, especially to theory, research and practice and the interconnections between them. The STF is a metatheoretical account of career development that accommodates career theories derived out of the logical positivist worldview with their emphasis on objective data and logical, rational process, and also of the constructivist worldview with its emphasis on holism, personal meaning, subjectivity, and recursiveness between influences. Indeed, one of the advantages of the STF is that it values the contribution of all theories. Clearly illustrated in the STF are the content and process of career development. The content influences are presented as a series of interconnecting systems of influence on career development, specifically the individual system, the social system, and the environmental-societal system, while the process influences include recursiveness, change over time and chance (see chapter 9 for more detail).

Recent work connecting the STF with other theories – again seeking to derive an integrated picture – has added to its broader contribution to convergence in our field. This is an example of the “integrative theorizing” advocated by D. Ford and Lerner (1992, p. 231). Patton (2007) presented a discussion of the potential for the STF in theory integration, in particular with respect to relational theories. McIlveen and Patton (2007a) proposed the integration of dialogical theory (Hermans, 2002, 2003) with both career construction theory and with the STF. These authors proposed that the notion of dialogical self may contribute to understanding how individuals construct career-related stories of life themes. With its multiple voices

and positions, dialogical self is central to the construction and co-construction of life themes. Whilst life themes theoretically provide for the why of career, the notion of dialogical self provides a theoretical solution to the problem of *how* that meaning is constructed. As the STF moves the conceptualisation of career beyond the bounds of the individual toward a broader contextual understanding, dialogical self stands as a theoretical construct which can explain *how* individuals can bring meaningful coherence to the apparent complex and disparate systems of career influences. Dialogical self is thus presented as a potential theoretical construct to augment the explanatory capacity of both the STF and career construction theory. Patton (2008) discussed similarities and differences between the STF and career construction theory, noting the contribution that both had made to the convergence agenda. More recently, drawing from the connections between the STF and the contextual action theory noted by Young et al. (2007), Patton (2014) expanded a discussion on these commonalities, in particular focusing on conceptual understandings and practice dimensions. Patton concluded that these approaches have more in common than different. “In developing a closer understanding of each of them, and their shared understandings and practices, we can develop a new informed connectedness in our theorizing and in our practice.”

A number of other systems theory approaches have attempted to integrate the complex array of career development influences and processes. These include the ecological approaches of Szymanski and Hershenson (1997) seeking to represent people with disabilities, and Cook et al.’s (2002a, b; Conyne & Cook, 2004a, b) ecological systems representation of women’s career development.

#### *Social Cognitive Career Theory*

As discussed previously in this chapter, Lent and Hackett (1994) viewed their emerging social cognitive career theory (discussed in detail in chapter 4) as a model of convergence through its integration of existing theoretical constructs (reiterated further by Lent, 2013). Their model focuses on a number of constructs which exist in other theories (e.g., types in Holland’s theory; role salience in Super’s work) and brings them together within the framework of Bandura’s (1986, 1997) theory. In particular, Lent et al. (2002) asserted that “SCCT was designed ... to help construct useful conceptual bridges, to identify major variables that may compose a more comprehensive explanatory system, and to sketch central processes linking these variables together” (p. 257).

#### *Contextual Explanation of Career*

In describing their contextual explanation of career (see chapter 4), Young et al. (1996) acknowledged that the concept of context is understood in various ways. These authors proposed a framework informed by Pepper (1942) for understanding key aspects of many contextual approaches to career. Further, they proposed action theory as a means of integrating aspects of contextualism. These authors defined the basis of contextualism as “the recognition of a complex whole constituted of

many interrelated and interwoven parts, which may be largely submerged in the everyday understanding of events and phenomena” (p. 479). Context consists of multiple complex connections and interrelationships, the significance of which is interpreted according to an individual’s perspective. Young et al. identified several aspects of the contextualist metaphor crucial to their contextual explanation of career. These include the goal directed nature of acts, acts which are embedded in their context. Change is integral within this perspective, and “because events take shape as people engage in practical action with a particular purpose, analysis and interpretation are always practical” (p. 480). Finally, these authors maintained that reality is constructed from the present event outwards, thereby rejecting the systems theory notion that reality is only constructed in relationship with an individual’s own internal representation, that is only a contextual truth is possible. Thus these authors draw on key concepts of systems theory and reject others.

Young and Valach (2000, 2004) emphasised that the action theory of career serves as an integrative approach to career theory in that it not only integrates social-contextual and psychological perspectives, but also “explicates social perspectives that have the effect of moving (the theory) beyond traditional career approaches and linking it directly to constructionism” (2004, p. 501). Young and Popadiuk (2012) have further affirmed that “one may think about contextual action theory as more of an epistemological perspective or metatheory than a career theory in the narrow sense of that word” (p. 19).

#### *Career Construction Theory*

More recently, Savickas (2002, 2005, 2013a; see chapter 3 for a more detailed description) has presented career construction theory, a developmental theory of career construction wherein he has proposed a further integration of the segments of Super’s theory of career. Savickas accessed social constructionism as a metatheory, and then drew on McAdams’ (1995) framework for organising personality theories

to enable (him) to progressively incorporate into one overarching theory the three classic segments of career theory: (1) individual differences in traits, (2) developmental tasks and coping strategies, and (3) psychodynamic motivation – or, for short, the differential, developmental and dynamic views of careers. (2005, p. 43)

In drawing on existing theories as well as incorporating a metatheoretical framework, Savickas’ work is demonstrating a number of stages of integration and convergence.

#### *Integrative Relational Theory of Working*

Blustein (2001, 2006, 2011) proposed an inclusive and integrative psychology of working, emphasising that much of our work has been developed in relation to understanding work lives of a small proportion of the population, those that live in

relative affluence. His multidisciplinary framework emphasises that vocational psychology must draw upon theories of sociology as well as “theoretical ideas emerging in other domains of psychology outside of the traditional purview of vocational psychology” (p. 177) through studying work in a range of contexts, including organisations, home, and culture. In particular Blustein (2006) proposed two alternative meta-perspectives which he viewed as possible organising frameworks – social constructionism and the emancipatory communitarian perspective. More recently Blustein (2011, Blustein et al., 2011) advocated incorporating relational theory into this model, advancing the self-in-relation construct proposed by Blustein and Fouad (2008). This proposition is designed to more firmly connect the self and the relationships both familial social as well as cultural and historical that influence the self.

#### THE 1990S FOCUS ON CONVERGENCE

The beginning of the 1990s saw a number of review articles, originating in the acknowledgment of twenty years of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, which seem to have accelerated moves toward convergence. Osipow (1990) identified the similarities and differences between theories in an article entitled *Convergence in theories of career choice and development: Review and prospect*. Osipow identified four theories which he asserted remained the most influential, namely the work of Holland (1985a), Dawis and Lofquist (1984), Super (1980), and L. K. Mitchell et al. (1979). He named common themes in these theories in the areas of biological factors, parental influences, outcomes, personality, methods, and life-stage influences, but noted that the emphases and importance of each of these themes varied in different theories. Osipow concluded that while the theories are evolving to resemble each other in several ways, differences remain and each offers practical utility for different populations. These key theories identified by Osipow are similar to those identified by Super (1992).

The notion of integration of theory was also raised in a later retrospective article in the same journal by F. H. Borgen (1991). F. H. Borgen identified what he referred to as “converging trends toward an integrative career psychology” (p. 279). These included a greater focus on the personal agency of individuals, the developing potential of cognitive psychology to contribute to integration, and the increasing similarity being observed between theoretical constructs and explanations.

Another 1991 review article for the same journal by Hackett et al. raised the need to identify common constructs and outcomes, and to assess commonalities and relationships in existing theories. These authors emphasised that it was time to investigate proposals for integration of career theory, and in particular, identify the variables important to an overarching theory of career development (p. 28).

Super (1990) commented on the understandable segmental nature of much theory development in the area of career psychology, “in view of the size of the problem” (p. 221). He acknowledged that theories which attempt to encompass too much may suffer from superficiality, and that future theories of career development

“will be made up of refined, validated and well-assembled segments, cemented together by some synthesizing theory to constitute a whole which will be more powerful than the sum of its parts” (p. 221). Super (1992) added to this discussion, commenting that no theory in itself is sufficient, and that in order to adequately address the complexity of career development, contributions from each of the major theories are necessary (see earlier in this chapter).

This development in discussion about integration and convergence led to the publication of other articles advocating ways to integrate theory. In emphasising the need to create integrative and comprehensive theoretical syntheses of career theory, Gelso and Fassinger (1992) also acknowledged the potential of the contextual perspectives of personality and developmental psychology. In particular, they discussed the research and theoretical potential of the process-person-context framework of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1988).

A major development in the move toward convergence was the convening of a conference specifically on the issue, an indication of its significance to career development theorists. In particular, attention focused on convergence between career development theories, empirical research, and career development theory and practice. Papers from this meeting of invited scholars in the field were published in Savickas and Lent (1994) who noted that the project sought “to facilitate theory convergence, stimulate theory unification research, and prompt more explicit use of theory in guiding vocational research” (p. 3). The editors also noted that the book was the first attempt to facilitate “*rapprochement* among career theories” (p. 5).

A review of the papers by the prominent theorists in the convergence text (Savickas & Lent, 1994) volume shows that there is no agreement in the field about the value of convergence. While Super (1994) reiterated the existing diversity in conceptualisation of his theory, Holland (1994) was emphatic in rejecting the concept of convergence and recommended the reformulation of existing theory. Krumboltz (1994) also expressed concern about the need for convergence, providing a map analogy of the state of career theory whereby each theory includes parts of the terrain (career development) and leaves others. This analogy formed the basis for his conclusion that theories are chosen for different purposes. Dawis (1994) distinguished between theory unification and theory convergence, calling the former a “will-o’-the-wisp” (p. 42). He suggested that there are two approaches to demonstrating convergence – “first, showing equivalence or similarity or overlap, and second, showing linkage, which could include superimposing a larger framework on the linkages” (p. 33). Spokane (1994) emphasised that while convergence on terminology may be achieved, it is much more difficult to achieve convergence in underlying philosophy. Finally, Bordin (1994) highlighted an area of consensus in career development, the importance of the individual. As previously discussed, he also suggested the potential of the family system to serve as a platform for theory convergence.

In reviewing the success of the convergence conference, Lent and Savickas (1994) noted that there was some variation in understanding of the meaning of convergence, and that this diversity may have contributed to the differing views.

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They commented that understanding of the term ranged from construction of one grand theory to “an effort to explore points of commonality, to account for the relationships among seemingly diverse constructs, to promote more comprehensive theories, and, where possible, to reduce redundancy and promote parsimony” (p. 266). Vondracek and Fouad’s (1994) conclusion to their group discussion at the convergence conference echoed that of Lent and Savickas. While commenting that not enough is known to converge theories, and that convergence may inhibit a counsellor from constructing his or her own theory of vocational behaviour, these authors noted that

There was agreement that it was most important to acknowledge the contributions of various theories and to recognize areas in which they were complementary, while still recognizing that much work remained to be done to better explain vocational behavior and more effectively help clients. (p. 208)

In advocating an overarching framework of career theory we support this conclusion. Such a framework can highlight commonality and diversity in existing theories, while encouraging further work on the areas which require it.

Other participants at the convergence conference identified areas not adequately accounted for in existing theoretical formulations (reviewed in more detail in chapters 2-6) which need to be accounted for within a framework of convergence of theory. For example, Fitzgerald and Betz (1994) identified inadequacies within current theory, such as the relevance of the concept of career development to large groups of people (for example women and people of non-western races), and theoretical constructs which ignore structural and cultural factors. These sentiments were echoed by Vondracek and Fouad (1994). They proposed that the concept of cultural and structural factors be used to “provide an overlay to, or new perspective for, the consideration of career theories” (p. 113). Other concepts raised as important inclusions in a comprehensive theory included the family system (Bordin, 1994; S. D. Brown & Watkins, 1994), contextual affordance (Lent & Hackett, 1994; Spokane, 1994; Walsh & Chartrand, 1994), and the person-environment interface (Blustein, 1994; Rounds & Hesketh, 1994; Spokane, 1994).

### INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORKS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

As previously discussed the Systems Theory Framework (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a, b) has received considerable theoretical (Amundson, 2005; D. Brown, 2002d; Blustein, 2001; Chen, 2003; Van Esbroeck, Tibos, & Zaman, 2005) support within the field as a significant metatheoretical framework, and considerable empirical work has added to its validity (N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005; McIlveen, McGregor-Bayne, Alcock, & Hjertum, 2003; McMahon, Patton, & M. Watson, 2003, 2004; McMahon, M. Watson, & Bimrose, 2013; McMahon, M. Watson, Foxcroft, & Dullabh, 2008; McMahon, M. Watson, & Patton, 2005; M. Watson & McMahon, 2009). Its status as a metatheoretical framework for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is well established.



Chen (2003) proposed a bridging of the gap between objectivist/positivistic and constructivist approaches as a strategy for theoretical integration. He suggested three themes under which theoretical integration could occur, namely career self-realisation, career as a reflection of growing experiences, and career as context conceptualisation. His discussion of each of these themes draws from a range of existing theories, and Chen suggested that these themes “attempt to ‘integrate’ rather than ‘converge’ tenets from different theoretical approaches and models” (p. 213). However he suggested that this integration “proposes a flexible and eclectic relationship between theories, in general, and between the two major schools of thinking – positivism and constructivism – in particular” (p. 213).

Other suggestions for integrative frameworks include Schultheiss’ (2003) proposal that relational theory be extended to the career domain to provide a more holistic integrative framework “or meta-perspective” (p. 304) that more fully recognises the relational connectedness in people’s lives and the incorporation of career and noncareer domains of functioning into our understanding of career behaviour. The relational approach has been discussed in chapter 6 in relation to understanding the contribution of traditional notions of women’s career behaviour to career behaviour of both women and men. Earlier in this chapter we have noted that relational theory has been incorporated in developmental science (Lerner, 2011), and Blustein’s framework (Blustein, 2011). Young and Popadiuk (2012) have identified relational theories as a key social constructionist metatheory being incorporated more into career theory.

More recently, Guichard (2005, 2009) proposed a general theory of lifelong self-construction which articulates propositions from sociological, cognitive and dynamic-semiotic domains. Guichard asserted that such a theoretical approach enables a differentiation between universal processes, specific processes and contents. Another recent integrative paradigm is that proposed by Savickas et al. (2009). These authors have proposed a life-design framework which incorporates the work of Guichard (2009) and Savickas’ career construction theory.

#### ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CONVERGENCE

As discussed, not all theorists are in agreement about the need for convergence, about its definition, and about the form it should take. Others may be supportive of the project as worthwhile for the career field, but maintain that it is premature because of the limited existing empirical base. However the considerable activity of thinkers and writers in the field for 40 years now to develop integrative, convergent, bridging and metatheoretical frameworks is indicative of the ongoing belief in the importance of this work. Several advantages and disadvantages can be identified.

Advantages of convergence include the acknowledgment that not one single theory can fully explain the complexity of career behaviour (Hesketh, 1985; Osipow, 1983; Savickas, 2005; 2013b; Super, 1992), and that a comprehensive framework may assist career counsellors in practice (Savickas & Walsh, 1996; Schultheiss, 2003). Second, without a comprehensive theory, research resources

and endeavours tend to be split toward the pursuit of outcomes from individual interventions derived from different theories. Third, the credibility of an overall field is not enhanced by the lack of a comprehensive and unified picture. While there are several theories vying for the position of the theory of career development, a unified picture is impossible for practitioners and researchers. Osipow (1990) emphasised that existing theories all have an important contribution to make, appropriately address different issues, and are appropriate for different problems. However, a unifying framework can enhance the potential of seeing a “big picture”.

Disadvantages of a convergence project have been raised by a number of authors (D. Brown & Brooks, 1996b; Holland, 1994; Savickas, 1995). They include suggestions that unification may discourage the creation of new theories, and that constructive theory building a step at a time is better. Integration without careful thought may result in unrelated constructs being drawn from different theories and contributing to further ambiguity. Related to this concern is that convergence may lead to interesting elements of existing theories being ignored. Other comments have included that convergence needs to be an empirical exercise rather than a literary one, and that a political agenda may be forced through a unification project. In addition, comments have been raised about the limitations of a convergence project, that it can only result in a “convergence in terminology, not in philosophy or theory” (Savickas, 1995, p. 10). A final disadvantage is that as science moves toward postmodern approaches and related pluralism, that unity, or single approaches, are out of tune. More recently, although the term ‘convergence’ has been less frequently used, the issue remains. Thus theory building continues to progress (this is evidenced, for example, by a proliferation of research on SCCT) as do propositions for convergence (e.g., career construction theory).

#### THE PRESENT POSITION OF CAREER THEORY

It is clear that the field of career development theory is dynamic and undergoing change, also affirmed by Betz in her 2008 review. While theoretical integration and convergence remain one of its major issues, there are a number of related concerns which need to be addressed. The first and second editions of this book were critical of the lack of attention paid to relevant input from other disciplines. A number of authors (Blustein, 2001; Collin & Young, 1986; Lent, 2001; Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982; Van Maanen, 1977) maintained that working within discipline boundaries restricts the maturation of career theory. This chapter has emphasised that there has been a significant growth in multidisciplinary activity in the field, across a number of existing theories as well as with new and emerging paradigms. The call by M. B. Arthur et al. (1989) and Blustein (2001) emphasising the extent of the impact that other disciplines could make to our understanding of careers has been listened to and is evident in a large number of frameworks discussed in this chapter. The greater input from disciplines other than psychology in career theory is also necessary as career practitioners increasingly need to be aware of economic,

sociological, and political issues which impact on clients' career decision-making (see also chapter 6).

Despite a significant history in the development of theory to account for career development, the theory remains disparate and segmented. While the move toward incorporating constructs and processes derived from the root metaphor of contextualism has resulted in a greater convergence in the sharing and modifying of theoretical concepts in traditional and newly emerging theories, separate models are still being proposed (Blustein, 2006, 2011; Schultheiss, 2003, 2013). The only major exception is that of Lent and his colleagues (Lent, 2005, 2013; Lent & Hackett, 1994; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002) which has attempted to integrate constructs and processes into the framework. There still remains little coherence in the career theory literature, which can still be viewed as competing theories searching for the truth in career development, or more generously as a number of theories continuing to focus on specific aspects of career development within a whole which is not yet clearly specified.

Several common themes emerge from the discussion on integration and convergence of career theory to date. These include the need for theory to include many concepts and issues which have not yet been adequately accounted for (for example, developmental phases of career, different groups, cultural and structural factors). In addition, just what form such integration and convergence will take remains unclear, whether it be one grand theory, several segmented theoretical contributions under one umbrella such as developmental theories, frameworks or models identifying theoretical commonalities, or a more loose identification of complementary contributions and conceptual relationships. In addition, there is little agreement in the field about the value of, or future of, convergence. F. H. Borgen (1991) asserted that "vocational psychology has unprecedented prospects for integration" (p. 280), and Holland (1994) viewed the activity as futile. D. Brown and Brooks (1996b) and D. Brown (2002a) have asserted that the divide between constructivism and positivism means that "convergence among theories and the development of an integrated theory seems less likely today than ever" (2002a, p. 15). Other writers have emphasised that integration must be advanced. This view has been clearly presented by D. Ford and Lerner (1992) who commented that

Without the construction of more integrative and comprehensive frameworks than those that presently exist, we are likely to be increasingly overwhelmed by mountains of data and empirical generalizations. They continue to accumulate as a pile of 'bricks' of knowledge, each of which can contribute toward the construction of a cathedral of knowledge we have not yet built. The role of integrative theorizing is to help decide how to combine those 'bricks' in a way that represents a more accurate and less mechanistic view of ourselves and that will help us learn how to construct more humane societies. (p. 231)

However, F. H. Borgen (1995) believed that "a field can thrive with apparently opposed paradigms and epistemologies" (p. 430); "We can have both – expanding

our insights through perspectivism but also building on the empirical strengths of traditional research” (p. 429). More recently, the importance of integrative frameworks, and in particular the developmental-contextual metaframework, has been emphasised by Vondracek and Porfeli (2008).

We acknowledge each of these themes and believe that systems theory, also related to the root metaphor of contextualism, can provide the basis of an overarching framework within which commonalities and relationships can be identified and within which theory development can occur. Thus it is against this background that we (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) proposed that systems theory provides the key to a unifying metatheoretical framework within which to locate and utilise the extant theoretical insights on career development.

The STF diminishes some of the earlier cited disadvantages of convergence. As an overarching framework focusing on all of the parts as well as the whole, new or revised theoretical developments need not be discouraged. With the individual as the central focus, constructing his or her own meaning of career, constructs of existing theories are relevant as they apply to each individual. The STF encourages pluralism as each individual’s career is the prime concern. Finally, the framework also allows for relevant constructs and meanings from other disciplines.

## CONCLUSION

The career theory literature continues to emphasise the importance of integration and convergence (Betz, 2008; Blustein et al., 2011; Hartung & Subich, 2011; Patton, 2008). Hartung and Subich (2011) drew together a group of authors looking at theoretical commonalities and differences in relation to how the self is conceptualised. Within this volume Blustein et al. (2011) commented on the significant ways in which career theories converge, noting that “The most basic point of convergence focuses on the complex ways in which individuals seek out an optimal fit between their personalities and the characteristics of their work environment” (p. 216). However these authors noted that an underlying theme in most theories is that of individual volition and that this is no longer an appropriate assumption. Concluding her review of vocational theories, Betz (2008) noted that

although we are not at a point of full theoretical integration or convergence ... we definitely have theoretical co-mingling. Researchers have realized that there are useful concepts in vocational psychology, not all associated originally with a single theoretical model. This is a positive trend – each theory can offer us some useful ideas, but our ability to increase our understanding of vocational behavior and career development across groups and across the life span may be enhanced by multiple concepts and postulates. (p. 369)

This chapter has discussed the philosophical underpinnings of existing career theory and relevant recent changes. Related changes to thinking about individual career theories and the overall picture of career theory have been presented.

#### TOWARD INTEGRATION IN CAREER THEORY

Attempts to integrate the disparate theories have been identified, and the more recent activities which focus on convergence in the field have been detailed. While new paradigms have importantly influenced the field, there appears to be no additional consensus since the previous edition of this book. There is little dispute that some combination of constructs and theories is necessary to provide a coherent and practical overarching picture. Systems theory has been suggested as an overarching framework to unify existing theories. The next chapter discusses systems theory. In chapter 9, we present the framework which we have developed to provide a metatheoretical synthesis of the existing career theory literature, the Systems Theory Framework.

## CHAPTER 8

# SYSTEMS THEORY

As discussed in chapter 7, systems theory has been proposed as a potential overarching framework for career theories. This chapter will briefly describe the history and development of systems theory and its emergence from, and contrast with, the traditional worldview. While systems theory is perceived as the basis for the construction of a new worldview, its development from different sources and in different disciplines has led to varying assumptions about systems themselves, how they are organised, and their essential properties. Thus this chapter will outline key elements of systems theory, and briefly illustrate each one with its relationship to career theory. Finally, existing attempts to relate systems theory to career behaviour will be presented. This chapter then sets the base for our macro-level analysis of systems theory as an overarching framework for career development theory. Chapter 9 extends this analysis, presents the Systems Theory Framework in detail, and illustrates its application at the micro-level of individual career development.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SYSTEMS THEORY

The emergence of systems theory has essentially been a reaction to the traditional classical, analytic, or positivist worldview on which much of our thinking has been based. This traditional view assumes that the world operates in much the same way as a machine, and that within that structure, each part operates in a particular way to accomplish an outcome. It further assumes that all action is related to a carefully balanced interdependent model of linear cause and effect. The classical worldview concentrates exclusively on that which is observable, insisting that the only valid knowledge is that gained through sense perceptions. Principles of this worldview include the focus on objects as separate and observable, the belief that natural unhindered development will always yield progress, and that such progress is incremental and linear.

Criticisms of this worldview have included the failure of linear stage based models to adequately account for the complexity of human development. In addition, development based on invariant sequences of maturational unfolding cannot account for situational and contextual influences in the development process, such as environmental changes which interact with the person, and the rich diversity of individual differences based on factors such as gender and ethnicity. Further, much change is random and unpredictable.

In contrast, the systems worldview values the whole, a system which is more than the sum of individual parts. Rather than focus on cause and effect between

parts, patterns of interrelationship are viewed as more important. Progression within this pattern is not always linear; the complexity of a system is far too great. The application of systems theory to learning changes our traditional view. The concept of knowledge acquisition, that is we add to our existing body of knowledge, becomes dated. Rather than assume a quantitative view of knowledge, that is we know more, it is viewed in a qualitative way. Within this perspective, new knowledge is incorporated into existing frameworks in a relational and associative way. Further, not all change is incremental: enduring change may also be sudden. For example, brief therapy has been modelled on this principle. Interventions within this mode of operating are designed to heighten the existing situation through actively confronting it, with a view to bringing about enduring change.

The complexity of systems theory reflects the complexity of science. As such, simple definitions are difficult to construct (Plas, 1992). However, by way of definition, the following statement is reflective of the interconnecting concepts which underpin systems theory:

... this newer thinking is much more concerned with patterns of functioning. Searching for the causes of human activity ceases to be important. Inductive and deductive logic make room for other types of rationality, such as reasoning by analogy. Understanding human language patterns is critical. Everything is viewed as dynamic rather than static. Spontaneous change can be expected under certain circumstances. Working with wholes instead of pieces of the whole is fundamental. (Plas, 1986, p. 3)

Within this theoretical viewpoint, the human system is viewed as purposive, ever-changing and evolving toward equilibrium. An individual's behaviour is conceptualised as "a product of a dynamic and holistic psychological system in which person and context interact in complex and reciprocal ways" (Chartrand, Strong & Weitzman, 1995, p. 46). The human system, itself a complexity of interrelated subsystems, interacts with other systems and subsystems, living and nonliving. Human life consists of ongoing recursive processes involving disorganisation, adaptation, and reorganisation. Knowledge about self and the environment is an emergent process as the individual interacts with the world (Mahoney & Lyddon, 1988).

#### GENERAL SYSTEMS THEORY

Attempts to view life as composed of systems appeared as early as 1925 (Whitehead, 1925) and in the early work of von Bertalanffy (1940). Katz and Kahn's seminal work on organisations as systems was published in 1966. von Bertalanffy has been acknowledged as the founder of the systems movement. As a biologist, von Bertalanffy was starting his career when the field of biology was deeply entrenched with the vitalistic-mechanistic dichotomy, rather like the body-mind controversy in psychology and philosophy. Some biologists proposed organismic theories which focused on the whole organism possessing a capacity to

integrate its parts and functions. Such a view was similar to the Gestalt theory in psychology. von Bertalanffy (1950a, b) went beyond the pure descriptions and philosophical speculations and sought explanation for holistic organising principles in basic laws of physics and chemistry, developing a version of classical theory of thermodynamics which was applicable to closed and open systems. As such, von Bertalanffy proposed the theory of open systems to explain organismic properties of living organisms. According to von Bertalanffy the classical theory of thermodynamics applied to 'closed systems' (e.g., man-made machines) which were characterised by progressive changes tending towards an increase of entropy. These changes led to an equalisation of energy throughout the system, and the attainment of its most probable state which was that of randomness and disorganisation.

Von Bertalanffy published his first major statement of General Systems Theory (GST) in 1968. The aim of the GST movement was to encourage the development of theoretical systems which are applicable to more than one of the traditional parts of knowledge. von Bertalanffy posited that certain principles are valid for systems in general, irrespective of their inherent content and energy. He also was critical of traditional deductive and inductive reasoning processes which led to identification of parts rather than wholes, and a focus on linear causal explanations. Rather, he encouraged a reasoning based on analogy, with a focus on a search for patterns. von Bertalanffy believed that the General Systems Theory, an expanded version of the Open Systems Theory provided the needed conceptual framework for the basic unity of human knowledge, for the unity of natural sciences and humanities. As such he made important contributions to psychology, psychiatry, sociology, anthropology, cybernetics, philosophy and history. He believed that general systems theory of biology was applicable to other disciplines, in particular to those concerned with humans. An organism was a system of complex biochemical reactions. A society was a system of communication patterns and institutions, while a culture was a system of symbols. The systems theory was therefore able to be applied to physiological, psychological and sociological phenomena. He believed that the unity of systems is the basis of the unity of nature in spite of the kaleidoscopic motley of external appearances. von Bertalanffy believed that the laws of development of open systems applied not only to the development of biological systems, but also to the development of symbolic systems, to that of societies and of cultures. He called this extended version of the open systems theory – the General Systems Theory.

While the notion of GST has essentially not emerged, and has been consistently criticised, the prevalence of systems thinking across a large number of disciplines "establishes 'systems' as a meta-discipline" (Checkland, 1979, p. 129). Indeed, Checkland maintained that the major contribution of the systems movement has been, not the development of an overarching theory, but applications to problem areas in specific disciplines. A negative corollary, however, has been the variation in its development across disciplines, so much so that Checkland (1981) also commented on the difficulty of establishing a coherent view of the systems movement as a whole.



Contributors to systems theory have come from the fields of physics (Capra, 1975, 1982), biology, anthropology and psychology (Bateson, 1972, 1979; Bateson et al., 1956; von Bertalanffy, 1940, 1950a, b), and other psychologists including Berger and Luckmann (1967), Katz and Kahn (1966), and Cantril, Ames, Hastorf and Ittelson (1949), known as the transactional functionalists. The development of field theory by Lewin (1951) has also had an important influence on the development of systems theory in psychology. The work on living systems by Ford (1987) and Ford and Ford (1987) has furthered the advancement of an integrated framework of human development and the evolution and understanding of systems theory. Developmental Systems Theory (DST; D. Ford, 1987) and Motivational Systems Theory (MST; M. Ford, 1992) have illustrated the applicability of systems theory principles to human behaviour. Indeed Lerner (2006, 2008) has emphasised the contribution of systems thinking to developmental psychology, commenting that it has been changed “from a field framed by a unidisciplinary, developmental psychological conception of change to one that is framed by a developmental science model, that is, a multidisciplinary integrative approach to understanding the breadth of the course of human life” (Lerner, 2008, p. 71).

Lerner (2008) emphasises the new developmental science which “uses dynamic, developmental systems models to describe, explain, and optimize the course of human life” (Lerner, 2008, p. 71). Lerner (2006) identified the defining features of contemporary developmental systems theories of human development as “(a) relationism, the integration of levels of organization; (b) historical embeddedness and temporality; (c) relative plasticity; and (d) diversity” (p. 2). Further, Lerner (2008) emphasises that developmental systems models “stress that mutually influential relations among the multiple, biological through sociocultural, physical ecological, and historical levels of organization within the ecology of human life should be the focus of the developmental analysis” (p. 71).

Given the significant advancement of developmental systems theories in developmental science, it is important to include here the nine defining features of developmental systems theories (Lerner, 2006, p. 3). First, Lerner asserted that developmental systems theories are “framed by a relational metatheory ... there is a rejection of all splits (e.g., between nature- and nurture-based variables), and between continuity and discontinuity and between stability and instability. Systemic syntheses or integrations replace dichotomizations or other reductionist partitions of the developmental system” (p. 3). Second, all levels of organisation within the ecology of human development are integrated. Third, developmental regulation across ontogeny involves mutually influential individual-context relations. Fourth, integrated individual-context relational actions are the basic unit of analysis. Fifth, the human organism is characterised by the potential for change, by plasticity. Sixth, the magnitude of plasticity may vary across the life span as developmental regulation may both facilitate and constrain opportunities for change. Seventh, the combinations of the variables across the integrated levels of organisation will vary across individuals and groups. Eighth, the promotion of positive human development is underpinned by the instances of plasticity possible

in individuals and in context. Ninth, developmental systems theories require collaborative multidisciplinary scholarship.

An expansion of general systems theories and developmental process theories has been proffered by the work of Thelen and L. B. Smith (1994, 2006; L. B. Smith & Thelen, 2003), demonstrating the continuing focus on these underpinning theoretical frameworks. These authors acknowledge the relatively new work in dynamic systems theories. They emphasise the focus on creating order from complexity, and stability and change, and like Schiersmann (2012), base their discussion on the brand of dynamics called synergetics. Acknowledging the intellectual heritage of general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968) and the developmental systems theory of D. Ford and Lerner (1992), Thelen and L. B. Smith (2006) emphasise that dynamic systems theories are not in opposition to existing theories, but instead add two key things – “an emphasis on understanding development as a complex system of nested dynamics, and a complex system of self-organizing interactions at many levels of analysis” (p. 307).

It is over 2 decades since the Systems Theory Framework was first published (McMahon & Patton, 1995). It has established itself as an application of systems theory to theory integration as well as to individual integration of the many systems of influence relevant in career decision making (see this described elsewhere in this book, in particular see Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). The STF has received international attention (ACES/NCDA, 2000; D. Brown, 2002d; Patton, McMahon, & M. Watson, 2006; UNESCO, 2002). Amundson (2005) identified the STF development as one of four significant innovations in career theory, and more recently Young and Popadiuk (2012) identified this framework as one of the key constructivist frameworks. Indeed a growing body of work has also been identifying connections between the STF and other theories (e.g., STF and relational theory, Patton, 2007a; STF and dialogical self theory, McIlveen, 2007a; STF and career construction theory, Patton, 2008; STF and contextual action theory, Patton, 2014).

More recently, other paradigms which have been influential in bringing the principles of systems theory to understanding change include the complexity paradigm, or the science of complexity. In addition, Pryor and Bright (2003a, b; 2011) have presented a chaos theory of careers which is conceptualised on the basis of systems theory and complexity theory. The major contribution of historically significant researchers, thinkers and movements will be discussed as their work has formed the basis of, and contributed to a greater understanding of many of the key concepts of systems theory.

#### *Fritjof Capra*

Two important contributions to systems theory were made in the work on quantum physics of Fritjof Capra (1975, 1982) – the notion that all things are interconnected, and the notion that no object can be studied in isolation: all phenomena exist only in relation to each other. In 1996, Capra presented a web of relationships, emphasising the multiple and changing nodes within which living

things actively adapt and create. Focusing on one aspect only, therefore, is likely to cause other aspects to be missed or undervalued, and uncertainty is an inevitable outcome. In studying subatomic phenomena – that which cannot be seen – Capra discovered that the building block approach to classical physics was no longer applicable. He emphasised the importance of the relationship between the observer and the observed. As a result, he maintained that the phenomena being studied can be represented only by that relationship. Therefore, the reality we come to know is inseparable from the relationship between the observer and the observed.

In describing this experience, Capra also became aware of the limitations of our language in being developed for and available to describe only experiences based on our senses: we have no language to describe experiences independent of our physical senses. In acknowledging the consequences of studying objects which could not be seen, touched or heard, Capra described the world according to modern physics as follows:

... the worldview emerging from modern physics can be characterized by words like organic, holistic and ecological. It might also be called a systems view, in the sense of general systems theory. The universe is no longer as a machine, made up of a multitude of objects, but has to be pictured as one indivisible, dynamic whole whose parts are essentially interrelated and can be understood only as patterns of a cosmic process. (1982, pp. 77-78)

#### *Gregory Bateson*

Bateson, a biologist-anthropologist-psychologist-theoretician, contributed considerably to our understanding of systems. During the 1950s, Bateson and his colleagues pioneered an approach to treating schizophrenia which focused on the system (the family) rather than the patient (the individual) (Bateson et al., 1956). Within this framework, Bateson believed that schizophrenia was a problem related to communication within the family rather than an individual disease, a notion which was the forerunner of family therapy. As a result, one of his key contributions to systems theory was the suggestion that communication patterns are functionally representative of the system. This communication is not necessarily linear; there are feedback loops in messages between system members (Bateson, 1972).

Bateson's study in biology also led him to expand his notions about communication patterns to broad 'connecting patterns'. He believed that biological patterns and communication patterns all served to connect (Bateson, 1979). Within the focus of communication, Bateson also drew attention to the limitations of our language, and emphasised the need for people operating from a systems view to focus on the primacy of language and its meaning.

Bateson's work also led him to conclude that there is no such thing as objective knowing – a notion shared by many systems theorists. Since we cannot know objective reality, all knowing requires interpretation. Bateson concluded that the understanding we have of any event is determined and often therefore restrained by

the individual's interpretive framework, that is, pre-existing experiences and suppositions. He maintained that our interpretation of events is determined by its fit with patterns which are already known to us. Further, he maintained that events which cannot be patterned are not selected for incorporation into our reality; they will simply not exist as facts.

Related to these concepts of interpretive frameworks, connecting patterns and the role of language is another important contribution from Bateson to systems theory, that of the need to develop processes of reasoning by relationship, or by analogy. Bateson called this process abductive reasoning, in contrast to the processes of inductive reasoning (reasoning from the part to the whole) and deductive reasoning (from the whole to the part). Abductive reasoning emphasises relationships and similarities of patterns. For example, we are used to the following sentence stems – 'that reminds me of' or 'that is just like'. In describing someone as just like their brother or sister, we are using abductive reasoning, that is, commenting on similarities in patterns of behaviour or in patterns of appearance.

#### *Berger and Luckmann*

The relationship between the knower and the known which has emerged from early systems theory was further explicated by Berger and Luckmann (1967) in their classic book *The social construction of reality*. These authors emphasised that reality is a function of what is actually there as much as it is a function of the relationship between the individual who is perceiving and what they are perceiving. As that individual is operating within a physical and social system, as is the reality he or she is perceiving, these two systems merge as the observer becomes part of the reality which he or she is observing.

#### *Transactional Functionalists*

Ames and Cantril and colleagues conducted experiments in visual perception (Cantril et al., 1949), and later social perception (Hastorf & Cantril, 1954). In their trapezoidal rooms, objects closer to the observer (at the front of the room) appeared smaller, rather than larger, than objects farther away (at the rear of the room). These experiments again illustrated that perception of reality occurs as a result of the relationship between the observer and the observed. These researchers concluded that knowing a reality without observer 'contamination' is theoretically impossible: "We have believed that our knowledge discloses the innate constitution of things apart from their relationship to us. We fail to realise that we can know nothing about things beyond their significance to us" (Ames, 1960, p. 4). Reality, then, is a result of the transaction between the observer and the observed.

#### *Kurt Lewin*

Proponents of field theory aimed to draw analogies between the physical sciences and the social sciences. Lewin (1951) developed the notion of the life space, a

## CHAPTER 8

notion designed to represent all the psychological factors operational at any given time for each individual. He drew life spaces and plotted psychological movements toward goals and actions. Field theory's contribution to systems theory is in its focus on the total system in understanding individual behaviour: an individual's behaviour is a combination of intrapersonal variables influenced by variables located outside the individual, and operating within his or her life space.

### *Katz and Kahn*

These authors developed a theoretical model for understanding organisations based on systems theory (Katz & Kahn, 1966). They defined systems theory as being "concerned with problems of relationships, of structure, and of interdependence rather than with the constant attributes of objects" (p. 18). Given that all systems, including organisations, depend upon their external environment, they need to be conceptualised as open systems. These authors described detailed principles and elements of systems and their functioning and as such challenged traditional views of human organisations as closed systems.

### *Ford – Living Systems Framework*

As discussed in chapter 7, the work of D.Ford (1987) is becoming increasingly used as a model for theory integration. Writers agree that the Living Systems Framework (LSF) proposed by Ford is too complex to be subjected to an adequate summary (Vondracek & Kawasaki, 1995). We would agree wholeheartedly and strongly recommend that interested readers refer to D. Ford's own works.

The (LSF) represents a comprehensive model of human functioning, based on an exhaustive, multidisciplinary review of theory and research on human behaviour and personality. Consequently, it is complex, inclusive, and requires immersion (rather than a superficial reading) by those who wish to utilise it. (Vondracek & Porfeli, 2008, p. 212)

D. Ford (1987) began his framework development by comparing mechanical systems with human systems. He attributed human qualities to these control systems, hence the notion of living systems. These human qualities included human capability for biological self-construction (e.g., development of physical and mental capacities), behavioural self-construction (e.g., directing one's behaviour toward a specific goal), and self-renewal. The framework includes the many structures, processes and functions that interweave to become what we know as human behaviour. In constructing it, Ford has drawn on decades of development in developmental psychology and related fields. As such, D. Ford's framework is an example of abduction, an exploration of patterns and relationships in various disciplines and subdisciplines to develop a framework based on similarities and differences.

The LSF aims to represent all aspects of humanness operating on all levels in all contexts. It has been constructed by drawing on normative and nomothetic

knowledge about human behaviour as well as idiographic knowledge. It is therefore “a comprehensive theory of human functioning and development that integrates scientific and professional knowledge about the characteristics of people in general (nomothetic knowledge) and the organization and operation of these characteristics in individual persons (idiographic knowledge)” (M. Ford, 1992, p. 19). D. Ford (1987) commented as follows:

The individual is conceived both as a whole and as a sum of component parts; change in the individual occurs to maintain stability. The LSF also emphasises that human behaviour is a function of the interaction of the person and context. Change in the organism is conceived as both developmental and transformational, thereby incorporating the key elements of developmental psychology and systems theory.

Because of the complexity and comprehensiveness of the framework it is most instructive to use the words of M. Ford and D. Ford (1987) to summarise:

The Living Systems Framework (LSF) is designed to represent all aspects of being human, not merely a particular facet of behavior or personality ... It describes how the various “pieces” of the person – goals, emotions, thoughts, actions, and biological processes – function both semi-autonomously as a part of a larger unit (the person) in coherent “chunks” of context-specific, goal directed activity (behavior episodes). It also describes how these specific experiences “add up” to produce a unique, self-constructed history and personality (i.e., through the construction, differentiation, and elaboration of behavior episode schemata), and how various processes of change (self-organization, self-construction, and disorganization-reorganization) help maintain both stability and developmental flexibility in the organized patterns that result (steady states). Thus the LSF cannot be easily characterized in terms of traditional theoretical categories. Rather, it is a way of trying to understand persons in all their complexly organized humanness. (pp. 1-2)

This definition reflects the holistic emphasis of systems theory, where all aspects of the person are seen as integrated into a whole. It also is suggestive of the fluidity of the individual system, and the notion that both flexibility and stability are incorporated within change.

#### *Developmental Systems Theory*

Developmental Systems Theory (DST; D. Ford & Lerner, 1992) was formulated to extend developmental-contextualism (the basis of the theoretical model of Vondracek et al., 1986, is discussed in chapter 4). More recently Lerner, Theokas and Jelicic (2005) explored development systems theory’s potential to understand the agentic behaviour of adolescents. In particular, DST aims to extend the focus of the individual to all relevant aspects, and to the processes by which individuals function. It represents a synthesis between developmental-contextualism and the Living Systems Framework of Ford and Ford. Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) have

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asserted that it is a significant advancement over the developmental-contextualist perspective. DST has been discussed in more detail in chapter 4 and in chapter 7 as an example of theoretical integration. Further, Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) have asserted that DST will be useful in understanding the role of biology in career development, of particular import as a growing proportion of the population is ageing.

### *Motivational Systems Theory*

Motivational Systems Theory (M. Ford, 1992) was developed to provide a theoretical integration of the many motivation and behaviour theories in existence (e.g., actualisation theory, social learning theory, social cognitive theory, attribution theory, self-efficacy theory, optimal theory, expectancy valence theory). As such its aim is very similar to that which underpins the Systems Theory Framework described in the next chapter. In recognition of the plethora of closely related theories and concepts, the primary theoretical rationale for Motivational Systems Theory (MST) is the urgent need for a conceptual framework that addresses the consensus, cohesion, and integration in the field of motivation. MST attempts to bring coherence to the field by providing a clear, concise and comprehensive conceptualization of the basic substance and organization of motivational patterns and by showing how other theories can be understood within this integrative framework (M. Ford, 1992).

As discussed in chapter 7, MST has been used specifically within the career theory literature by Vondracek and Kawasaki (1995) and Krumboltz and Nichols (1990) to try to integrate aspects of career development. MST acknowledges the interrelationship between the individual and the environment in progressing toward career related goals, and the centrality of motivational factors to an individual's functioning. Motivation is identified as a key construct in influencing achievement. M. Ford identified personal agency beliefs (PAB), which consist of both capability beliefs and context beliefs, with the former referring to judgements individuals make about themselves, and the latter representing individuals' judgements about whether their environment will facilitate or constrain their efforts. Capability beliefs are similar to the construct of self-efficacy expectations identified in SCCT (Lent et al. 1994). In relation to the current discussion of MST, it is important to note that M. Ford asserted that it is the joint contribution of capability and context beliefs which are useful in understanding motivational patterns of individuals as they act within their contexts/layered systems.

### *Complexity Theory*

A number of writers representing what has been termed the emerging science of complexity have further developed criticisms of the dominant paradigms which have been shown to be limited because of their static and reductionistic representations of human behaviour. Contributors to thinking about this complexity paradigm state that human beings are complex adaptive systems and that traditional

explanations limit our potential to understand human behaviour. Their ideas are published in works such as *Complexity: The emerging science at the edge of order and chaos* (Waldrop, 1992), *Complexity: Life at the edge of chaos* (Lewin, 1994), *Chaos: Making a new science* (Gleick, 1987), Zohar's *The quantum self* (1991) and Morowitz's *The emergence of everything: How the world became complex* (2002). Although there is no one theory representing this worldview, Leong (1996b) has outlined the characterising features of complex adaptive systems as a way of illustrating elements of complexity theory. These include the following: nonlinear, multivariate, nonequilibrium, open, pattern forming, adapting, evolving and co-evolving, and self-organising. Each of these features can be seen to be an extension of the worldviews underpinning systems theory discussed earlier in this chapter and are forming the basis of new understandings of career development.

Senge (1990) asserted that systems theory thinking was needed more than ever because of the overwhelming complexity of our times. He viewed systems theory as "a discipline for seeing wholes ... a framework for seeing relationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static 'snapshots'" (p. 68). Senge identified two forms of complexity: detailed complexity and dynamic complexity. Detailed complexity relates to the number of variables considered in a situation; dynamic complexity reflects the complexity of the interrelationships and feedback patterns between the variables. All human behaviour involves both detailed complexity and dynamic complexity. Traditional theories of career development focused on the detailed complexity whereas theories which have been developed from constructivist and systems theory perspectives are increasingly focusing on both detailed and dynamic complexity. Senge has also applied principles of systems theory and techniques derived from these principles to the development of personal mastery (the development of inner leadership and personal empowerment) through the creation of more effective mental models, and an understanding of the detailed and dynamic complexities of an individual's role in systems.

Bloch (2004, 2005) has applied nonlinear dynamics and chaos and complexity theories to the construction of a new theory of career development. Bloch (2004) asserted that complexity theory explains actions and reactions in systems that seem at first glance to operate in a random manner, for example the weather. Within this framework it is important to understand the connectedness of all events throughout the universe. She outlined six principles of complexity theory and offered application to career development.

1. Open exchange – in career development individuals need to maintain an open exchange between all dimensions of the individual and between the individual and external environments.
2. Networks – "any being is part of many networks which can be depicted not only as concentric circles but also as ever-widening links to nodes beyond itself" (p. 345).
3. Phase transitions – living beings are dynamic and experience multiple career phases throughout the lifespan.
4. Fitness peaks – all individuals aim to maximise their potential.



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5. Nonlinear dynamics – phase transitions do not occur in planned or ordered ways and each transition, for example career transitions, “have internal harmonics or resonances for that individual and can only be understood in terms of that individual” (p. 346).
6. Attractors, Bagels and Emergence – these terms serve to explain the patterns of an individual’s movement through phase transitions, whether it be repeating similar patterns, moving in a circular fashion, and emergence into new experiences. These terms also can be applied to an individual’s movement through career challenges.

In furthering the discussion of complexity and the potential of systems approaches to assist in individuals’ “self organisation regarding their careers” (p. 156), Schiersmann (2012) drew on the theory of synergetics to develop a system modelling approach to assist counsellors in working with clients in uncertain context. The steps involve identifying the system, modelling the system, analysing the system, and detecting possible interventions. Schiersmann’s model focuses on the importance of patterns and relationships within an individual’s systems.

### *Chaos Theory*

Chaos theory is a science which focuses on patterns not predictability; the study of complex and turbulent events and nonlinear systems (Lent, 1996). Pryor and Bright (2003b, 2011) have applied chaos theory to the study of careers, and have described their work as “a systems theory approach in which complexity is acknowledged as contributing to the susceptibility of a system to change” (2003b, p. 122). These authors asserted that over time chaotic systems eventually self-organise into patterns, and have identified four major categories of attractor which is the state to which a system moves. The chaos theory of careers “seeks to understand individuals as complex, dynamical, non-linear, unique, emergent, purposeful open systems, interacting with an environment comprising systems with similar characteristics” (2003b, p. 123). Pryor and Bright (2003b) emphasised that their theoretical formulation is not necessarily concerned with content, but with the development of structures within which theoretical frameworks can be located. These authors have applied their chaos theory formulation to career counselling and career assessment (Bright & Pryor, 2005, 2007, 2011; Pryor & Bright, 2009), to argue a connection between science and spirituality (Pryor & Bright, 2004), and to an exploration of empirical questions derived from chaos theory (Bright, Pryor, & Harpham, 2005; Bright, Pryor, & Wilkenfeld, 2005).

## ISSUES IN SYSTEMS THEORY

The introductory section to this chapter has described the development of concepts and principles inherent in systems theory. It clearly illustrates the complexity of this perspective. However, Senge (1990) believed that systems thinking offers a language that can restructure how we think, and can therefore be useful in providing a “discipline for seeing the ‘structures’ that underlie complex situations”

(p. 69), the wholes and relationships that can more readily foster an understanding of complexity. As systems theory is only a relatively recent phenomenon, the identification of a coherent set of principles is still emerging. Constructing a definitive list of the elements of systems theory is therefore an almost impossible task.

However, before discussing some of the key elements of systems theory, it is instructive to consider two important underlying themes in systems theory which have recurred in the preceding section. These include the limitations we have about knowledge and how it occurs, and the limitations of our language in describing our knowledge and understandings. Language and epistemology are at the core of understanding the discussion on the elements of systems theory, so it is important that we address these themes.

#### *Assumptions about Knowing*

Common to many of the contributors to systems theory presented in the first section of this chapter has been the questioning of assumptions about how knowledge occurs. These theorists, philosophers and researchers have forced us to reconsider whether it is possible to know an unencumbered essence of any reality. The limitations of our sensory functions and our contextual environment have been highlighted by many. For example, von Bertalanffy (1968) noted that generally the categories of thinking were relative, and that reality could be contemplated from different perspectives. He adopted therefore the position of 'perspectivism', rejecting the notion that categories of thinking were absolute.

In order to observe anything, there needs to be an observer, who is operating from a particular frame of reference, within a particular time, place and cultural framework, and who is using a particular language to describe the observation. Each of these factors influences the nature of the reality that is observed and how it is described. Objectivity and pure knowing is impossible; all knowing is necessarily a product of a process of interpretation. The epistemology underpinning systems theory holds that the only reality is the reality construed by the observer in interaction with the observed. This perspective is related to that of postmodern constructivism which seeks to gather multiperspectival data in an attempt to glean richer knowledge from many perspectives. It is the acceptance of this limitation to knowing that has prompted discussions on the validity of external 'available to all' observations. Within systems theory, validity is attained through interobserver reliability. Therefore if a number of observers reach an acceptable level of agreement about the occurrence of a phenomenon, then one can be more sure about the conclusions drawn (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

#### *Limitations of Language*

von Bertalanffy (1968) asserted that the most important symbolic system possessed by man was language. Although the roots of language are in the biological organism, the linguistic systems are endowed with a considerable degree of

autonomous existence, and with the capacity for spontaneous growth. Although symbolic systems are internalised by human beings they are subject to their own logic of intrinsic rules and show intrinsic developmental trends. Symbolic systems are not just aggregation of symbols – it is evident that they are governed by systems of rules prescribing the relations of symbols to one another. For example, in language syntax and grammar constituted such rule systems, the rules of calculus and inference are relevant to mathematics and logic. In addition, symbolic systems are not static but are constantly changing.

As we have discussed, reality is a function of the observed and the observer. The validity of an observation, according to a systemic perspective, relies on observer agreement; this agreement cannot be maximised unless the language of the observers has some similarity and equivalence of expression. In this way, language is a vital influence on the perception and description of reality. It both creates and reflects social realities – as Berger and Luckmann (1967) asserted, “Language marks the coordinates of my life in society and fills that life with meaningful objects” (p. 36). For example, these authors argued that we construct reality through our use of shared and agreed meanings communicated via a common language; therefore our ideas and beliefs are socially constructed. In a similar vein, Savickas (1995) emphasised that “linguistic concepts and their definitions do not mirror reality; they inscribe meaning” (p. 22). He continued to discuss the value in the term ‘construct’ over the term ‘concept’, in that construct incorporates the personal and cultural component of meaning making, whereas concept suggests something was discovered and named and is now objective knowledge. A clear example of this language issue can be found in the discussion of definitions of career in chapter 1.

Language, then, is an important intermediary in our perception of reality – so much so that Dewey and Bentley (1949) believed that to name is to know. These authors stated that language and our knowledge and understanding are inextricably intertwined – key factors in knowing include that there is a relationship between the observer and the observed, and that language represents the transaction between the two. For most people there are many instances in life when naming an observation, whether it is an emotion within the self, a sensory experience, or some other occurrence is hampered by ‘a loss for words’. In other cases, words of other cultures are said to be more adequate descriptors of phenomena than words of Western English; idioms are often unique to cultural and temporal experiences. These are examples of the relationship described by Dewey and Bentley, and of the limitations of language. In systems theory thinking, then, it is important to be aware of this relationship between language and our knowing, and of the limitations of each.

#### SYSTEMS THEORY ELEMENTS

The following constructs will be discussed as they are perceived as key elements of systems theory: wholes and parts, patterns and rules, acausality, recursiveness, discontinuous change, open and closed systems, abduction, and stories. Each of

them will be briefly discussed as they apply to understanding career theory and career behaviour. In addition, they will be specifically explained in relation to a practical example in chapter 9.

### *Wholes and Parts*

In 1968 von Bertalanffy asserted that

You cannot sum up the behavior of the whole from the isolated parts, and you have to take into account the relations between the various subordinate systems which are superordinated to them in order to understand the behavior of the parts. (p. 68)

A fundamental element in systems theory thinking is a focus on the unity of the system, that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Each component or subsystem of a whole is partially dependent on and partially independent of the whole of which it is a part. It is important not to break a system into parts as the coherence of the systemic operation will be changed. Further, while reductionist strategies of breaking a system into parts in order to understand it are intuitively sensible, key parts and key processes of systemic operation and patterns of relationship may be lost and individual subsystems inevitably will seem different when isolated from the whole.

Kraus (1989) has defined a system as “a whole which functions as a whole by virtue of the interdependence of its parts” (p. 6). Thus, in terms of career development, individuals and their contexts would be regarded as ‘a whole’, and the interactive process between individuals and their contexts would be regarded as ‘the interdependence of its parts’. Using a systems approach, “We are much more likely to view individuals as parts of ongoing interpersonal contexts than as discrete organisms seeking need fulfilment from the environment” (Kraus, 1989, p. 6).

Traditional career theory has tended to focus on specific discrete concepts relevant to individual career behaviour. In focusing on only one aspect relevant to career decision-making, for example, intrapersonal aspects such as self-concept, others are inevitably undervalued or ignored, and the nature of their interaction almost certainly will be, a notion emphasised by D. Ford (1987) earlier in this chapter. In relation to the metatheoretical work described in the present book, the proponents of the recent moves toward convergence (see chapter 7) have emphasised the importance of viewing the whole of career behaviour and the relationship between all relevant parts to each other and to the whole. In doing so, it is important that contributions from all theories are considered in exploring an individual’s career decision-making processes.

### *Patterns and Rules*

Related to a focus on the whole system is a focus on patterns, or what Miller-Tiedeman (1989) referred to as a web of interrelationships. Plas (1986) defined a pattern as “an identifiable arrangement of relationships ... that have recognizable

gestalts; that is, the arrangement of relationships within a pattern produces an organization that is experienced as a whole” (p. 73). Relationships occur both within the components of a subsystem, and among the components of a system. Katz and Kahn (1966) emphasised that “All social systems, including organisations, consist of the patterned activities of a number of individuals” (p. 17). D. Ford (1987) asserted that relationships within system components are more complex than those between system components; that is, intrapersonal processes are more complex than interpersonal processes.

While patterns are not unique to human systems, rules are a special form of a pattern which have been constructed by human systems – for example codes of conduct and communication. Rules vary according to different systems, for example different families have different rules, and societal and cultural norms also vary. In relation to career behaviour, it is important to recognise both individual patterns (e.g., resistance to change) as well as contextual patterns (e.g., ongoing change). Likewise it is important for career theories to be flexible enough to account for individual and contextual patterns and changes within these patterns. On a broader level, the review of frameworks in chapter 7 illustrated the existence of identifiable patterns between theories within the whole of the career theory literature.

### *Acausality*

A corollary of the systems theory focus on patterns and relationships occurring within wholes is the reduction in attention given to causality. In describing the organisation and functioning of mechanical structures, it is instructive to focus on their causal interdependence. For example, pulling the cord of a lawn mower causes the ignition to activate, the fuel to begin its path through the engine, and the other functions like gears and cutting tools to mobilise. There is a direct line of cause and effect, and a breakdown at one point can be traced back to its cause. However, humans are living systems and function in processual rather than structured ways. Capra (1982) illustrated the complexity of human systems in commenting on medical science:

This nonlinear connectedness of living organisms indicates that the conventional attempts of biomedical science to associate diseases with single causes are highly problematic ... The systems view makes it clear that genes do not uniquely determine the functioning of an organism as cogs and wheels determine the working of a clock. Rather, genes are integral parts of an ordered whole and thus conform to its systematic organization. (p. 269)

In relation to career theory, there is considerable restriction in existing theories which have focused on causal explanations of career behaviour, for example “This is because of that” or “As a result of that, this is likely to occur”. While causality provides a useful way of making sense of much behaviour, understanding living systems as organic wholes requires a reduction in focus on this concept. In addition, acknowledgment of the many interrelated influences relevant to career

development emphasises the limited and reductionistic nature of causal explanations.

### *Recursiveness*

Following from the limitations identified in relation to causality is the rejection by systems theorists of linearity. This postulate is as difficult to come to terms with as many of the others we have discussed as much of our conceptualisation about time, space and development is expressed in linear terms. For example, we go from here to there, and we develop along linear dimensions of height, weight, and growth. Traditional developmental psychology and stage theories of career are reliant on the linear construct to describe their behavioural understandings, and the field of psychopathology has traditionally focused on causal linear explanations for mental problems. Attempts by systems theorists to convey the meaning of nonlinearity have again been illustrative of limitations within our language. Senge (1990) emphasised the limitations of our language and at the same time its importance in shaping our perceptions:

What we see depends on what we are prepared to see. Western languages, with their subject-verb-object structure, are biased toward a linear view. If we want to see systemwide interrelationships, we need a language of interrelationships, a language made up of circles. (p. 74)

Dewey and Bentley (1949) used the term circularity, described as “not merely round the circle in one direction; the course is both ways round at once in full mutual function” (p. 109). Circularity, however, is problematic as it is suggestive of an irreversible and therefore deterministic relationship between present and future relationships between variables. Others have described functions involving feedback and feed forward (D. Ford, 1987; Senge, 1990), and the family therapy literature refers to mutuality (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1991). In relation to organisations, Katz and Kahn (1966) emphasised that “the energetic return from the output reactivates the (organisational) system” (p. 16), and that the system’s pattern of activities has a cyclic character where “The product exported into the environment furnishes the sources of energy for the repetition of the cycle of activities” (p. 20).

Plas (1986) drew on the term recursive, which Bateson had used extensively, as an appropriate starting point to describe nonlinear.

A recursive phenomenon is the product of multidirectional feedback, which occurs as functional and arbitrarily identifiable parts of a system emerge in transaction across time and space. A recursion is nonlinear; there is mutuality of influence. Any event that can be identified within a recursive human network can be viewed as the product of experience and anticipation. That is, any isolated movement or moment can be seen to be influenced by events in the past, present, and future. (Plas, 1986, p. 62)

Although past, present and future are linear constructions, they are influential in our present thinking and behaviour in a recursive manner. Recursiveness advances the concept of dynamic interaction further in that it does not presume reciprocal interactions, although it does stress mutuality. Thus feedback and feedforward mechanisms may not occur in a reciprocal manner in all interactions.

In relation to career theory, it is clear that the historical development of theories is related to the ongoing mutuality of influence between theorists, and between theorists, researchers and practitioners. In the same way, the various constructs and processes identified by career theorists as being relevant to career development are mutually and recursively influential in an individual's career behaviour. Recent formulations of career theory based on contextualism have focused on related processes, such as dynamic interaction (Vondracek et al., 1986) and triadic reciprocity (Lent et al., 1996, 2002), however each of these remains linked to notions of linear direction and causality. Conceptualisations from D. Ford (1987; Ford & Lerner, 1992) and M. Ford (1992) have emphasised that the individual is a self-regulating and self-constructing open system, with the self-constructing processes which involve feedforward and feedback processes being driven by biological and psychological capabilities.

### *Discontinuous Change*

Another feature of systems theory is ongoing change – that is a dynamic rather than static perspective. A system is always in a state of flux through continuous informational transaction with the environment that has the ability to affect it. Prigogine (1980), a chemist, referred to the process of maintaining and changing that occurs in open self-organising systems through ongoing interaction with the environment as negative feedback loops in which regulatory processes maintain stability and balance of the system. When the energy flow becomes too complex, either through volume or speed, a positive feedback loop emerges toward reorganisation, or growth and development of the system.

This process is a key element in understanding systems theory and has been explained in the work of D. Ford (1987; D. Ford & Lerner, 1992) and M. Ford (1992). Systems theory makes the assumption that, in a context of ongoing change, systems regulate themselves to maintain stability. Thus the self-organising and self-constructing nature of the living system maintains stability and regularity through appropriate transformation of environmental information, or self-renewal (Capra, 1982).

Within systems theory, change is not necessarily construed as progress. The term progress contains assumptions about linearity, and much change occurs without entailing progress. Change is often construed as slow and long term: growing, developing, evolving. However, systems theory also accounts for the occurrence of sudden or spontaneous change which occurs after a breakdown of the processes of accommodation of transactions with the environment. When this occurs, the system either develops a new set of patterns to accommodate change,

breaks down, or develops a completely new form of system organisation and functioning.

This change to a new form of system functioning is termed discontinuous change, and has been identified as occurring during major life crises. Systemic family therapists have developed strategies to attempt to introduce such change into systems where tried ways of functioning are no longer working. Within this framework of thinking, career theorists also need to acknowledge the contribution of futurists. Individual behaviour must change along with the rapid changes occurring within the workplace environment, and career planning (or life designing, see part three of this book for further discussion) must become increasingly flexible and adaptable. As Super (1992) commented, “We are evidently entering an age of emerging rather than preset goals” (p. 61). Such frequent change, as well as the occurrence of chance happenings, or happenstance (see chapter 4), may produce discontinuous change within an individual system.

#### *Open and Closed Systems*

von Bertalanffy (1950a, b; 1968) acknowledged the importance of open systems, as they appeared in nature. These systems internalised energy and matter from the environment and they utilised them to maintain the system’s organised structure. These systems maintained a steady state of dynamic organisation of kinetic processes and even could increase their complexity. Thus, these systems could be developing towards less probable states of higher complexity rather than towards more probable states of lower complexity. Open systems maintain steady states which have varying levels of equilibrium. These processes maintaining the steady state of open systems operated on the principle of ‘mass action’ rather than on the principle of discrete feedbacks of cybernetics. von Bertalanffy stressed the holistic properties of living organisms and their ongoing relational processes with the environment.

It is therefore the relevance of the person-environment relationship that distinguishes human systems as open systems rather than closed systems. A closed system is impenetrable and therefore impermeable to information introduced from outside, whereas an open system is permeable. “An open system can be understood only in relation to its necessary and actual environments. Trying to understand people’s functioning separate from their contexts would be the same as treating them as closed systems” (D. Ford, 1987, p. 50). Since an open system depends on the existence of an environment, it follows that transactions with aspects of the environment relevant to the system are always involved in an open system’s functioning (see also previous discussion on Prigogine).

The environment has been described and organised in a number of ways. The following three conceptualisations have been influential in the development of the framework described later in this book. Each of the following conceptualisations can be seen to be influenced by systems theorists, and by field theory (Lewin, 1951). First, D. Ford (1987) wrote about the hierarchical organisation of environmental components, and organised them as family, communities and



institutions, and society and culture. Second, Blustein (1994) referred to two levels of context: the immediate familial and interpersonal context, and the broader societal context represented by such factors as culture, socioeconomic background and other environmental influences.

Another way of categorising environments relevant to the present discussion is the third conceptualisation proffered by Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979). He conceived the ecological environment “as a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next” (1977, p. 514). These were termed as a microsystem, a mesosystem, an exosystem, and a macrosystem. The microsystem is described as “the complex of relations between the developing person and environment containing that person (e.g., home, school, workplace etc.)” (1977, p. 514). A mesosystem is a system of microsystems and includes the various settings in which an individual participates. The exosystem includes nonspecific formal and informal structures “which do not themselves contain the developing person but impinge upon or encompass the immediate settings in which that person is found, and thereby influence, delimit, or even determine what goes on there” (1977, p. 515). Examples given by Bronfenbrenner include the neighbourhood, the mass media, government agencies, and the world of work. Finally, the macrosystem “refers to the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems, of which micro-, meso-, and exosystems are concrete manifestations” (1977, p. 515). Vondracek et al. (1986) emphasised the complexity of the environmental influences of human development, and suggested that the Bronfenbrenner model “can lead to a more orderly, systematic, and comprehensive understanding of the context as it impacts career development” (p. 65). In a 1995 reconceptualisation of his work, Bronfenbrenner emphasised the importance of the “considerations of time and timing as they relate to features of the environment, as opposed to characteristics of the person” (p. 641). We have drawn from the work of Bronfenbrenner in the development of the Systems Theory Framework to be described in the next chapter.

### *Abduction*

As discussed earlier, another element in systems theory is an emphasis on analogous forms of reasoning. Both inductive reasoning, which is a reasoning based on deriving a general principle from a specific case, and deductive reasoning, which applies a general principle to a particular case, are linear in their application. In contrast, following the work of Bateson (1979), abductive reasoning involves processes of lateral thinking and is concerned with patterns and relationships. Patterns are explored for their relationship within each other, and for their relationship with other similar patterns. For example, the process that has created the Systems Theory Framework is an example of abductive reasoning. Systems theory has been explored in detail and principles which may assist in providing an overarching theoretical framework for existing career theories have

been studied and applied. Similarly, theories of career development have been studied in detail for their patterns and relationships.

### *Story*

The concept of story in systems theory was originally derived from Bateson (1979) who described it as an individual's explanation of the relevance of a particular sequence of connectedness in his/her life. Bateson went further and acknowledged that stories represent communications about patterns which connect all living things. Through stories, individuals make meaning and actively construct their lives. Systems therapists focus on individual and group (e.g., family) constructions of their reality; it is through these constructions that attempts are made to understand patterns and relationships. Therapeutic approaches which have focused on stories and narrative (e.g., M. White, 2004, 2007; M. White & Epston, 1989, 1990) can be seen to be derived from this notion. Thus M. White and Epston (1989) suggested that

Rather than propose that some underlying structure or dysfunction in the family determines the behaviour and interactions of family members, the interpretive method would propose that it is the meaning that members attribute to events that is determining of their behaviour. (p. 13)

Therefore helping clients story, or restory, experiences to give them different meanings will assist in understanding them.

Further, researchers informed by social constructionist principles have used narrative as a research tool to capture the context-richness and subjectivity of individuals' career lives (Cohen et al., 2004; Young & Collin, 1992). The development of the My System of Career Influences Reflection exercises for adolescents (MSCI; McMahon, et al., 2005a, b) and adults (McMahon et al., 2013a, b) which are based on the STF, enables individuals to reflect on and tell stories about their careers and thus embeds narrative between the counsellor and interviewee in the interview process. Similarly McIlveen's development of the My Career Chapter based on the STF also used narrative method in research and in the development of a reflexive counselling interview (McIlveen, 2007a; McIlveen & Patton, 2007b, 2010; McIlveen, Patton & Hoare, 2007, 2008). The STF constructs have been applied in developing and researching the story telling approach to career counselling (e.g., McMahon, 2005a, 2006a, 2007a, 2009; McMahon & M. Watson, 2010, 2012a, 2013). These narrative approaches have also been demonstrated in a range of career counselling approaches (see McMahon & Patton, 2006a) and this aspect of their use will be developed further in part three of this book.

A number of authors have emphasised the importance of the story of an individual's career, as reflected in Savickas' assertion that counsellors need to move to "stories rather than scores" (Savickas, 1993, p. 213) and act more as "biographers who interpret lives in progress rather than as actuaries who count

interests and abilities” by listening for clients’ life themes and stories (Savickas, 1992, p. 338). In career theory, each theoretical formulation can be seen to be derived from and representative of individual and group stories, or constructions of meaning (see Vondracek, 1990). Drawing on the work of McAdams (1993, 1996), Savickas’ (2005) description of career construction theory affirms the importance of story in theory and practice: “In chronicling the recursive interplay between self and society, career stories explain why individuals make the choices that they do and the private meaning that guides these choices” (p. 58). The seminal work of L. Cochran (1997) illustrated the use of narratives in career counselling. In earlier editions of this book, Patton and McMahon (1999, 2006a) recognised the importance of using story as a medium in career practices informed by constructivism and systems theory and have subsequently applied it in their application of the STF in qualitative career assessments for adolescents (MSCI; McMahon et al., 2005a, b) and adults (MSCI-Adult; McMahon et al., 2013a, b). Further, McMahon (2005a) applied systems theory constructs to develop a story telling approach to career counselling (e.g., McMahon, 2007a, b, 2009; McMahon & M. Watson, 2013). Similarly, McIlveen (2012) outlined the derivation of narrative in other fields of psychology, noting that it is relatively new to the career development field. Connecting narrative and dialogical processing, McIlveen developed the notion of the individual as a dialogical narrator that is developing self in conversation with other. Young and Popadiuk (2012) identified narrative perspectives as one of the key social constructionist perspectives in career theory. More recently, Richardson and Schaeffer (2013) emphasised the relevance of narrative, and its underpinning theory, the counselling and work perspective. Indeed, narrative approaches to career counselling have been proposed in the application of a number of recent theoretical propositions (e.g., chaos theory, Pryor & Bright, 2011).

#### SYSTEMS THEORY PERSPECTIVES IN CAREER THEORY

The first edition of the present book (Patton & McMahon, 1999) represented the first time career theorists had attempted to use systems theory to provide an overarching theoretical framework for the field of career development. The development of the STF to this third edition and in other significant publications has been well documented throughout this current book. However systems theory had influenced the thinking of career theorists and researchers for over two decades. These applications have been at three levels. First, several authors have acknowledged the potential of systems theory in furthering the integration of career theory and practice. Second, other writers have incorporated specific aspects of systems theory into their theoretical formulations. Finally, theoretical frameworks of human development derived from general systems theory have been adopted as frameworks within which to further understand specific aspects of human career behaviour. Each of these approaches will be discussed in turn.

*Acknowledgment of Potential of Systems Theory*

In acknowledging an increasing integration between various disciplines in career psychology, Osipow (1983) commented on an emerging “systems view of career behavior”, commenting that “With a highly sophisticated systems approach to career development, questions about the role of the biological, social, and situational factors in occupational behavior would become more explicit” (p. 314). As such Osipow noted that work to understand the interactions between these views would then inevitably emerge. A similar perspective was proffered in the fourth edition of the Osipow theory overview (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996).

Osipow (1983) commented that “the systems approach is in a position to take the most useful concepts of each theory of career development and apply them to the understanding of individual behavior” (p. 320). The emphasis in systems theory is on the importance of a whole being greater than the sum of its parts, the interrelationships between elements or subsystems of the system, and the changes that occur over time as a result of these interactions. The application of systems theory to career development would allow linking and coherent inclusion of existing concepts, thereby not devaluing existing theoretical contributions. A distinct advantage of systems theory is that it can be applied to all people and this addresses a major criticism levelled at much of the career development theory which does not adequately, if at all, apply to women, minority groups, non-western cultures, and groups from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

Collin and Young (1986) reviewed a number of approaches which are informed by the contextualist worldview (as identified by Pepper, 1942): the ecological/systems, the biographical, and the hermeneutical approaches. “Each approach has its own identity, literature, and methods, and none is without hurdles to overcome” (p. 843). However, each stem from a similar epistemology, and are perceived by these authors as “three faces of a coherent whole” (p. 843). The ecological systems framework identified by these authors emphasises a mutual and reciprocal interaction between the individual and the environment, and provides a strong reminder of the individual as an active agent. While traditional notions of development remained linked to concepts of linear stages and causality, an ecological systems framework accounts for discontinuity. For example, in times of change, individuals change their actions and as these responses are reinforced and fed back to the system, renewed equilibrium and self-renewal of the individual system occurs. Collin and Young (1986) emphasised the twofold value of an ecological/systems perspective: it presents an epistemological shift which focuses on how parts fit together and interact rather than how they are causally connected; and second, it is useful for integration. They highlighted one of the issues related to systems theory as it is conceptualised – namely that it is particularly abstract. As such they perceived that the ecological perspective, a special instance of systems theory, is more useful in representing human phenomena. Of the many useful contributions of this article, the complexity of terminology used to explain approaches which are derived from similar perspectives is clearly illustrated.

Collin and Young (Collin, 1985, 1990; Young, 1983) adopted the nested systems description of the environment discussed earlier in this chapter (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979) as an appropriate metaphor for an individual's career. These authors (Collin, 1985; Collin & Young, 1986) acknowledged the usefulness of systems theory as a framework for career, in particular its capacity to understand complex, interrelated events. In particular, Collin (1985) identified the need for an overarching theory to join together disparate and incomplete theoretical constructs, and suggested that "... an open system model of 'career' could generate a comprehensive, appropriate and grounded theory" (p. 48). More recently, Collin (2006) applied the systems approach to conceptualising family-friendly careers.

Bordin (1994) and Blustein (1994) both acknowledged the value of systems theory in contributing to a greater convergence of the existing theories of career development, in particular within the frameworks of the family systems movement (Bowen, 1978). These have been discussed in more detail in chapter 7. In developing a domain sensitive approach to counselling and career counselling, Blustein and Spengler (1995) also drew on what they referred to as 'systems theories' and their ability to "provide an epistemological lens with which to view a given phenomenon" (p. 313). In relation to career intervention, these authors emphasised the interplay and interdependence of systems relevant to human behaviour and the resultant change in parts of the system following an intervention as well as change in other system parts. In commenting on the future of career theory and practice, and convergence, Herr (1996a) noted that this "may also depend on greater attention to the importance of the explanatory power of general systems theory as the various parts of the individual's environments are understood in their interactive effects on behavior" (p. 16).

#### *Specific Incorporation of Systems Theory Principles*

A number of theoretical formulations have specifically incorporated elements of systems theory. We will discuss the work of Miller-Tiedeman (1988, 1989, 1999), Hershenson (1996; Szymanski & Hershenson, 1997), Cook et al. (2002a, b), and Pryor and Bright (2003a, b, 2011). Miller-Tiedeman's (1988, 1989, 1999) work was reviewed in detail in chapter 3. The theory is raised here as an illustration of the influence of systems theory in a specific career theory. Miller-Tiedeman (1988, 1999) developed her lifecareer theory which she conceptualised as "the general personal process that can accommodate both conventional career theory and the more comprehensive organizing themes of the new science" (pp. 33-34). Being critical of the narrow, other-determined state of existing career theories, she developed her theoretical formulations on the basis of the scientific shift to quantum theory and systems theory based on the work of Prigogine (1980) and Capra (1982), and universe process theory which emphasises self-determination (Miller-Tiedeman, 2008). Many of the principles described earlier in this chapter are embodied in her theoretical propositions.

Hershenson (1996) conducted a refinement of his work adjustment model which he had developed primarily as an example of theory-practice integration. He

attempted to include a greater acknowledgment of contextual and environmental variables, and developed what he referred to as “an adaptation ... to a systems format” (p. 443). In particular, Hershenson incorporated the principles of the framework of Bronfenbrenner (1977) to illustrate the relevance of a number of nested systems in understanding work adjustment. Thus he referred to subsystems of the person (work personality, work competencies, work goals), elements of the work setting (behavioural expectations, skill requirements, rewards and opportunities), and components of work adjustment (work role behaviour, task performance, worker satisfaction) as all operating within and across the systems of family/living, reference group/socialisation, school/learning, and cultural and economic context to facilitate work adjustment. He also applied elements of systems theory in his discussion on counselling for work adjustment, noting the interwoven nature of an individual’s systems and the effects of interventions on related systems in an individual’s behaviour. Therefore, once an individual’s career problem is determined, a related change in the relevant system will facilitate a change in another part of the individual’s system.

In a further application of this work, Szymanski and Hershenson (1997) applied an ecological approach to develop a more inclusive understanding of career. These authors incorporated influences identified in a number of existing career development and adjustment theories and developed a taxonomy which identified “constructs” of career development and “processes” of interaction of these constructs.

Cook et al. (2002a, b) developed an ecological model of women’s career development (see chapter 6 for more detail). These authors asserted the need for career development theorists to focus more on the contribution of individual and contextual influences to women’s career behaviour and constructed a framework around the multiple life roles and responsibilities of women. Pryor and Bright (2003a, b, 2011) emphasised that their chaos theory formulation (discussed in chapter 6 and earlier in this chapter) was underpinned by systems theory.

#### *Frameworks Specifically Derived from Systems Theory*

Finally, a number of theoretical conceptualisations designed to further understand human vocational behaviour have drawn specifically on frameworks derived from systems theory. In particular, we will focus on the work of Vondracek and his colleagues (Vondracek et al., 1986; Vondracek & Fouad, 1994; Vondracek & Kawasaki, 1995), and Krumboltz and Nichols (1990).

The developmental-contextual approach to career development proffered by Vondracek et al. (1986) has been deeply influenced by systems theory philosophy. These authors emphasised the importance of the context in human development, and their lifespan orientation allowed for change over time. Further, the concepts of embeddedness of relevant systems within each other, and interaction of these systems with each other (dynamic interaction), are clearly derived from the worldview which informs systems theory. Vondracek and Fouad (1994) illustrated the influence of systems theory in discussing interventions within the

developmental-contextual framework, suggesting that intervening at different levels of context can change the relevance of a particular variable. This principle of intervening within one system to bring about change in a related system has been clearly illustrated in family therapy practice (Bowen, 1978).

The work of Vondracek and Kawasaki (1995) in furthering the developmental-contextual model using the Living Systems Framework (LSF; D. Ford, 1987; M. Ford & D. Ford, 1987) is an example of work directly being derived from systems theory. The Living Systems Framework of D. Ford (1987, M. Ford & D. Ford, 1987) has also been applied as an overall theoretical framework by Krumboltz and Nichols (1990) to provide an inclusive ‘map’ for specific career decision-making frameworks. Both of these formulations have been discussed in more detail earlier in this chapter and in chapter 7. It is important to acknowledge the significance of the work of Ford’s Living Systems Framework, Developmental Systems Theory, and Motivational Systems theory in these formulations. These have all been discussed earlier in this chapter and in chapter 7. It is also important to acknowledge the move to discussion of development systems theories as meta-theories within the emerging field of developmental science (discussed earlier in this chapter).

### *Systems Theory and Related Conceptualisations*

It is clear systems theory is becoming increasingly influential in developmental science (Lerner, 2006, 2008), and in career development theory (McMahon, M. Watson, & Patton, 2014; Patton, 2008, 2014; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; Young & Popadiuk, 2012). This influence varies in degree. Systems theory has the potential to contribute to our understanding of the detail and dynamic complexity of career development. Specific theoretical models have been modified to incorporate some aspects of systems theory, although complete development of systems elements has not occurred. Further, frameworks which have been developed using principles of general systems theory (e.g., D. Ford, 1987; M. Ford & D. Ford, 1987; M. Ford, 1992; D. Ford & Lerner, 1992) have been utilised as conceptual frameworks for understanding the what and how of developmental human behaviour in relation to careers (Krumboltz & Nichols, 1990; Vondracek & Kawasaki, 1995).

There are many conceptual similarities between systems theory and related conceptualisations such as the contextual approach of Young et al. (1996), the developmental-contextual approach (Vondracek et al., 1986), the Developmental Systems Theory (DST; M. Ford, 1992; Vondracek & Kawasaki, 1995), Motivational Systems Theory (MST, M. Ford, 1992) and chaos theory (Pryor & Bright, 2003a, b; 2011). For example, while contextual approaches emphasise the need to acknowledge the influence of the multiple embedded levels of the environment in human behaviour, systems theory places more focus on the nature and process of this influence, “seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains, and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots” (Senge, 1990, p. 73). Vondracek et al. (1986) emphasised that developmental theory is at the

heart of career theory; systems theory emphasises that meaningful change is not always ordered or developmental. In addition, systems theory suggests that linear and causal relationships are restricted in their explanatory power of much human behaviour. Pryor and Bright (2003b) emphasised that “Chaos theory is a systems theory to understanding natural phenomena ... it does not assert that nature is anarchic as the name may imply, but merely that it is not completely deterministic and therefore is not predictable” (p. 16).

Vondracek et al. (1986) developed the notion of dynamic interaction to depict the mutuality of the influence of variables relevant in career development. Influence between variables may not always be reciprocal, and the bidirectional model of causality embedded in Bandura’s (1986) triadic reciprocity is also bound by linear and causal principles. It is here that the systems theory element of recursiveness, or multidirectional non-linear feedback, is particularly relevant. Indeed Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) emphasised that DST provided a significant advancement over the developmental-contextual perspective as it incorporated “the dynamics of the developing person” (p. 213). Senge (1990) also talked about two types of feedback relevant to the mutual flow of influence: reinforcing feedback in which actions propel an organism forward in a direction, or balancing feedback which focuses actions toward the desired goal. Both types of feedback show how actions can reinforce or counteract (balance) each other. Central to this feedback loop process is the notion that delays can interrupt the flow of influence. Furthermore, systems theory allows for non-developmental or non-linear change processes and therefore for circumstances of chance.

The contextualist worldview stresses the now of an event, and in doing so fails to place sufficient importance on the effect of both the past and future as influences on the individual and the context, and their interrelationship. Systems theory focuses on learning to recognise types of structures that recur, being influenced by past, present, and future influences.

## CONCLUSION

The field of career development, as with many other fields of psychology, is characterised by a variable and complex theoretical base. The need for an integrating strategy has been emphasised by many writers in the area, culminating in the 1990s in the conference on convergence in career development theories (Savickas & Lent, 1994). While the complexity in the status of theory reflects the complexity of career behaviour, the need for a corresponding complex grand theory, or group of theories, is not supported by all writers. Vondracek et al. (1986) commented that “The ultimate result of embracing an interdisciplinary, systems theory type view of career development will be a shift from simplicity to complexity” (p. 6). Constructivism and social constructionism have led to the generation of multiple perspectives on career (see McIlveen & Schltheiss, 2012). The complexity of the multidisciplinary developmental science has been clearly described by Lerner (2006); it is evident that this complexity will remain in career theories. As Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) noted:



## CHAPTER 8

Quitting the pursuit of human truth because it is too complex or obscured would be a tragic failure of the social sciences which include counselling and vocational psychology. Theoretical formulations that come ever closer to the true complexity of the world and the varying perspectives that humans share continue to be sought. (p. 217)

Criticisms of systems theory include its propensity to overgeneralise and to be so inclusive as to render all variables and their interactions unexplainable. We believe that the adoption of an integrative meta-framework based on systems theory can provide coherence to the field by providing a comprehensive conceptualisation of the many existing theories and concepts relevant to understanding career development. The Systems Theory Framework is not designed to be a theory of career development; rather systems theory is being introduced as the basis for an overarching framework within which all concepts of career development described in the plethora of career theories can be usefully positioned and utilised in theory and practice. The Systems Theory Framework (McMahon, 2002, 2011; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) has cemented its place in the career development literature. The development of this framework, a detailed description, and a summary of its influence in the field over the two decades since it was first proposed will be presented in the next chapter.

## **A SYSTEMS THEORY FRAMEWORK OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

The purpose of this chapter is to outline our Systems Theory Framework (STF) of career development, a specific attempt to provide a synthesis of the existing theoretical literature using a metatheoretical structure. As discussed, systems theory offers the potential to focus on different theories as being parts of a whole, and to search for relationships and patterns between variables as they are relevant to the individual. The framework will be presented in stages, each highlighting significant influences on career development and relationships with existing theoretical literature. Consideration is given to the STF, culture and context in relation to its western origins. Advantages of the framework will be discussed, and finally, the application of the framework to practice in the case of one individual will be presented.

It is important to acknowledge at the outset the twofold purpose of our framework. First, it has the capacity to reflect a macropicture of career theories, illustrating the contribution of each one of the theories and its interrelationship with others. In addition, it presents a framework of the influences relevant to an individual's career development, showing the many complex and interrelated systems within which such development occurs.

### *Development of the Systems Theory Framework*

As discussed in previous chapters, the field of career development, as with many other fields of psychology, is characterised by a variable, complex and everchanging theoretical base. The need for an integrating strategy has been emphasised by many authors, and has been for many years (see chapter 7). Within the broader field of human development, the emergence of developmental science is indicative of this search for a holistic integrative theory (Lerner, 2011). While the complexity in the status of theory reflects the complexity of career behaviour, the need for a corresponding complex grand theory, or group of theories, was the basis of the specific challenge posed to career theorists over a decade ago through the convergence conference (Savickas & Lent, 1994). Indeed the development of the Systems Theory Framework was originally conceived as a specific response to this challenge.

First proposed as a contextual model to account for adolescent career decision-making (McMahon, 1992), subsequent refinement of this model resulted in the first publication of the Systems Theory Framework of career development in 1995 (McMahon & Patton) and its first practical application publication in 1997 (Patton

& McMahon). Significantly, Lim (1997) demonstrated the broad application of the Systems Theory Framework to a range of cultural groups and settings and thus its capacity to address another of the challenges facing career theory, that, previously mentioned, of its failure to account for developmental phases of career, for cultural and structural factors (Stead, 2004), and for the career development of women (Fitzgerald & Harmon, 2001). For example, its application to the career development of women (Patton, 1997a), Australian Indigenous people (Sarra, 1997), and Chinese students (Back, 1997) was described. In addition, its application to contextual issues such as rural location (Collett, 1997) and socioeconomic disadvantage (R. Taylor, 1997) and to particular settings such as organisations (Dunn, 1997) was also described. In 1999, the major theoretical account of the Systems Theory Framework was first published (Patton & McMahon, 1999) with a second updated edition published in 2006a. The STF remains a significant advancement in the field (McMahon, 2002; Young & Popadiuk, 2012), with a special edition of the *Australian Journal of Career Development* focusing on its theoretical integrative contribution (McIlveen, 2007a; Patton, 2007a), as well as its contribution to research (Bridgstock, 2007; McMahon & M. Watson, 2007) and counselling (Byrne, 2007). While the challenge that originally drove the development of the STF was the desire to produce a metatheoretical framework through which the contribution of all theories could be recognised, its utility has become increasingly apparent in a number of areas. The STF has been applied to qualitative career assessment (McMahon et al., 2004, 2005a, b; McMahon et al., 2013a, b; McIlveen, Ford, & Dun, 2005; McIlveen et al., 2003), career counselling (McMahon, 2005a; McMahon & Patton, 2006a; McMahon & M. Watson, 2012a, b, 2013; McMahon, M. Watson, Chetty, & Hoelson, 2012a, b; Patton & McMahon, 2006a), multicultural career counselling (N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005), and to career counsellor training (ACES/NCDA, 2000). Its application to career education (Patton, 2005b, M. Watson & McMahon, 2006) and to career research (McMahon & M. Watson, 2006) has also been described. In addition, its application across countries has been suggested (Patton et al., 2006; UNESCO, 2002). D. Brown (2002d) noted the potential for the STF to provide an integrative theoretical framework for career theory, and Amundson (2005) identified this work as one of four significant theoretical innovations in recent career theory.

As evidenced by this brief history, Patton and McMahon (1999, 2006a) believed that the adoption of an integrative framework based on systems theory can provide coherence to the field by providing a comprehensive conceptualisation of the many existing theories and concepts relevant to understanding career development. The Systems Theory Framework is not designed to be a theory of career development; rather systems theory is being introduced as the basis for an overarching, or metatheoretical, framework within which all concepts of career development described in the plethora of career theories can be usefully positioned and utilised in theory and practice. With the individual as the central focus, constructing his or her own meaning of career, constructs of existing theories are relevant as they apply to each individual.

## THE SYSTEMS THEORY FRAMEWORK

The Systems Theory Framework (STF) was developed to be a useful overview of important influences on career development as identified by the many theorists, researchers, and practitioners who have contributed to our understanding in this field. Central to the STF is the individual whose system of career influences is represented within the framework. The STF aims to identify two broad components of career theory, content and process. Within content, the framework identified variables applicable to the individual and to the context, thereby outlining key influences on career development. We deliberately chose the word 'influence' to describe intrapersonal and contextual factors relevant to the career development process as we believe it is less static than 'factors' and is a dynamic term capable of reflecting both content and process. An influence acts as input into an individual's system, and can relate with the system in a number of ways. Within a systems theory perspective, an individual could perceive an influence as a barrier or as a facilitator in relation to career development.

Within process, the framework identifies the existence of recursive interaction processes within the individual and within the context, and between the individual and his/her context. This recursive interaction contributes to the microprocess of decision-making, and the macroprocess of change over time. Finally, the process component of the framework also identifies the relevance and importance of chance.

In presenting the Systems Theory Framework, the common elements reflected in the convergence of the literature are also essential to the interrelated elements of a systems theory perspective. The content influences in the framework are:

- the individual system,
- the contextual system including the social system and the environmental-societal system,

and the processes influences are:

- the recursive nature of the interaction between the individuals and their contextual system,
- change over time, and
- chance.

The framework is presented according to these elements to demonstrate the component parts of a systems theory perspective on career development, their interrelationship and finally their contribution to wholeness.

*The Individual*

The review in part one of this book highlighted the increasing emphasis in the literature of the importance of the individual as the centre of the career choice and development process. Thus the individual is the centre of the STF. The importance of the individual as the focus of career development is reflected in a number of theoretical perspectives. Traditionally, the role of the individual in career decision making has been central (Ginzberg, 1972; Parsons, 1909; Super, 1990), however

this view has been limited to the individual being shaped by their ability, gender, socioeconomic status and other related influences (e.g., L. S. Gottfredson, 1981, 1996; Roberts, 1977, 2005, 2012). Several developments encouraged the active involvement of the individual. These included the practical work of Holland (1973) in developing the Self-Directed Search which encourages individual involvement in the career decision making process. The theoretical work of Bandura (1977, 1986) in developing the concept of self-efficacy gave more focus to an individual's ability to act on his/her environment rather than merely respond to environmental experiences: "Reinterpretation of antecedent determinants as predictive cues rather than as controlling stimuli has shifted the locus of regulation of behavior from the stimulus to the individual" (Bandura, 1977, p. 192).

This perspective has been mirrored in the work of Vondracek et al. (1986) who also emphasised the uniqueness of the individual and his/her context, and the resultant uniqueness of the interaction between each individual and that context: "As a consequence, we may only speak probabilistically of the effects a given person may have on his or her context, and of the nature of the person's development that will therefore ensue" (p. 78).

The worldview presented in chapters 7 and 8 also stresses that there is "no objective, ordered social reality outside the individual's construction of it through subjective and intersubjective meanings" (Collin & Young, 1986, p. 842). As discussed in chapter 8, such a view of the world incorporates the individual as defining and determining his or her own reality, and negates the traditional view of causality in relation to effects from the environment. Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990, Miller-Tiedeman, 1999) extended the view of individuals as constructors of their own lives in asserting that "lifecareer" only needs to make sense to the individual. Savickas (2001, 2002, 2005, 2013a) agreed with the notion of individuals being actively engaged in a process of career construction.

Organisational psychologists also have suggested that the importance of the individual in their own career development is increasing due to changes in the workplace. Hall (1996) describes his "protean career" as that which is "driven more by the individual than the organisation. This would call for frequent change and self-invention and would be propelled by the desire for psychological success rather than by externally determined measures of success" (p. xvi).

The importance of the self, and its various theoretical conceptualisations continues to be a major focus in vocational psychology. More recently, Hartung and Subich (2011) edited a book focusing on the self in work and career. For example, a number of theories have advanced the notion of the self as being connected to the environment, the self-in-relation (Blustein & Fouad, 2008); and the self as active agent (Lent & Fouad, 2011). These authors described what they referred to as a "*self system* rather than a singular sense of self or a monolithic variable such as self-concept" (p. 73).

In his Archway Model, Super (1990) identified the person as the central component, or "keystone" of his model. In the STF presented in this chapter, the individual is the central feature. Super (1990) used the term "self" in his model, however we prefer to use the term "individual" in our framework to suggest the

uniqueness of a person and his or her situation, and to reflect the concept of personal agency which is embedded in current theoretical perspectives that are informed by the constructivist worldview. In addition, following the work of Ford (1987), Leong (1996a) asserted that “each individual is in and of him or herself a complex adaptive system” (p. 341). It is in this context that we view the individual in the STF.

Thus, the centre of the STF is a circle representing the individual. The circle contains a range of intrapersonal influences on career development which are possessed by all individuals, yet are different for each individual. Influences in [Figure 9.1](#) include both some of those more frequently featured in the descriptions of a number of writers, and some which have traditionally been neglected.

### *The Individual System*

Many of the influences represented in [Figure 9.1](#) are represented in existing career theories and have been referred to in this capacity in chapters 2-5. Other influences however, traditionally under-represented in existing career theories and discussed in chapter 6, have been included because of their fundamental importance in the career development of individuals. Personality is central to the work of Holland (1985a, 1992, 1997) and the five factor theory (McCrae & John, 1992). Interests and beliefs are also central to Holland, and to both social learning theory (L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, 1996) and social cognitive theory (Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002; Lent, 2013). Values have received renewed emphasis (D. Brown, 1996a, 2002b, c; Patton, 2000a). In his life-span life-space approach and Archway Model described in chapter 3, Super (1990) included many of these influences, including specifically the self-concept. Savickas (2002) emphasised that career denotes a personal reflection by the individual on his or her vocational behaviour: “From this perspective, a subjective career is a reflexive project that transforms individuals from actors in their career to subjects in their own story” (p. 152). More recently, Savickas (2013a, b) has affirmed the role of the individual as object, subject and project, noting the importance of acknowledging the role of the individual in social construction of his/her life projects.

The development of stage theories by Super (1953, 1957, 1990) and L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002, 2005) illustrates the importance of age. From the standpoint of systems theory, we need to move beyond the view of age in terms of a linear and chronological sequence of stages to a perspective in which the implications of age vary with other influences, such as social influences, and may change over time. For example, a certain age does not always reflect a particular stage in development. In addition, Bronfenbrenner (1995) emphasised the importance of the life course, and the influence of the historical period through which an individual lives. His life course principle emphasised that “A major factor influencing the course and outcome of human development is the timing of biological and social transitions as they relate to the culturally defined age, role expectations, and opportunities occurring throughout the life course” (p. 641). Knowledge of the world of work has been inherent in career theory since the work

of Parsons (1909) and remains a key factor in some recent theories, for example the cognitive information processing theory (Peterson et al., 1991, 1996, 2002; Reardon et al., 2011).

Authors in the career counselling and organisational literatures have focused on the importance of spiritual beliefs and career values which are underpinned by psychological fulfilment rather than financial accomplishment in individuals' career decision-making (Bloch, 2000, 2004; Bloch & Richmond, 1997; D. Brown, 1996a, 2002b, c; L. S. Hansen, 2001; Oliveira, 2000; Savickas, 1997b). While this work remains developmental, it is clear that career values and spirituality need to be present in each individual's system of influences. Spirituality, as a less tangible and more esoteric construction, has not been included in the STF diagram but is an important influence that career development practitioners may encourage their clients to tell stories about and to include in their personalised STF diagrams (see Chapter 13 for a description of the STF's qualitative career assessment instrument, the My System of Career Influences [McMahon et al., 2005a, b; McMahon, et al., 2013a, b] which enables clients to construct personalised STF diagrams).

The lack of attention to gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation in career theorising has been highlighted in chapter 6. The importance of gender has been noted through the work of a number of authors (e.g., Astin, 1984; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Fassinger, 1985, 1990; L. S. Gottfredson, 1981, 1996; Hackett & Betz, 1981; Patton, 2013b; Patton & McMahon, 2005; Richardson, 2012a, b; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013; Schultheiss, 2003, 2009, 2013). The career development needs of ethnic groups (Arbona, 1990; D. Brown, 2002b; A. Byars, 2001; Cheatham, 1990; Fouad & Kantamneni, 2013; L. S. Gottfredson, 1986; Osipow & Littlejohn, 1995; E. J. Smith, 1983) have also been emphasised. Following the attention in career counselling research on the particular career development issues of lesbians and gay men (see Chung, 2003), and the identified inapplicability of theories of women's career development to lesbians (K. Morgan & L. Brown, 1991; Patton, 1997b; Prince, 2013; Ragins, 2004), sexual orientation has also been included as an important individual influence.

Disability has also been given scant attention in the theoretical literature to date, with some mention in the work of L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990, 1996), Lent et al. (1994, 1996, 2002; Lent, 2013), and Szymanski and Hershenson (1997). In addition, these authors commented on physical attributes and talent in relation to career choice. We believe it is timely to include disability in the framework as an influence in its own right rather than as an adjunct to ability.

Finally, health has been seen as important indirectly through Krumboltz's attention to genetic endowments. A holistic view of the individual needs to emphasise physical and mental health in relation to career choice and development. Work adjustment theory (Dawis, 2005; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) in particular drew attention to the potential relationship between job satisfaction and physical and mental health. In addition, there is a voluminous literature on the physical and psychological health effects of unemployment (e.g., Artazcoz, Benach, & Borrell, 2004; Feather, 1990; Fryer & Ullah, 1987; Herr, 1992; Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1993; Paul & Moser, 2009).



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Figure 9.1 The individual system

The relationship between health and employment and unemployment is one example of the interaction between many of the intrapersonal influences in this circle and sociocultural influences. For example, being born as female or male can be viewed as a chance occurrence, although gender is a socially constructed variable. The cultural construction of values also emphasises the relationship between intrapersonal and sociocultural influences. World of work knowledge is related to access to resources and can be seen to be related to gender, socioeconomic status, geographic location, and other influences. Such knowledge is particularly crucial in our globalised environment. With unemployment particularly affecting certain age groups more than others, age and environmental-societal influences are related. Finally, in many ethnic groups, we acknowledge that the family is a major focal group in development, not the individual.

#### *The Contextual System*

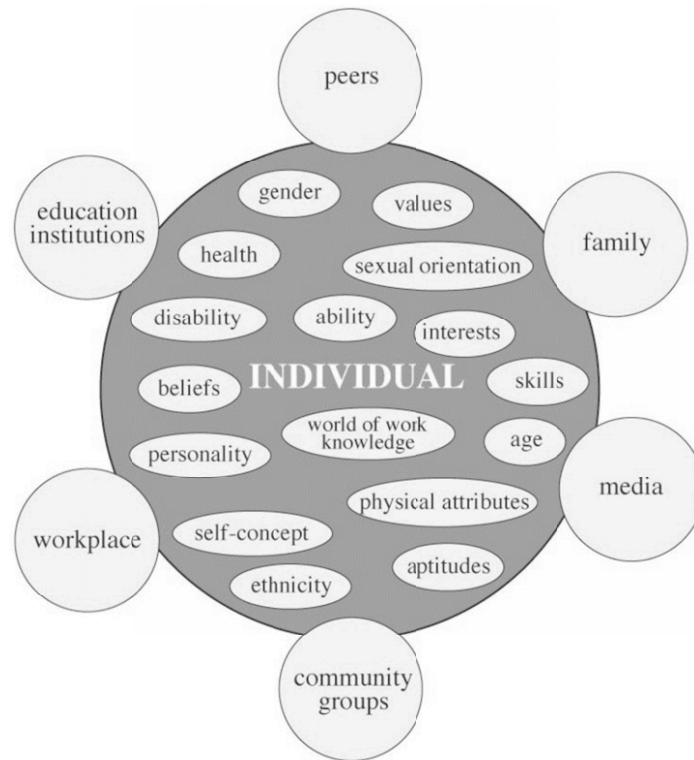
In terms of systems theory, an individual is a system in its own right, with the influences in [Figure 9.1](#) representing its subsystems. However, an individual as a



system does not live in isolation, but rather as part of a much larger system. These principles have been discussed at length in previous chapters, particularly chapters 7 and 8. In fact, life roles exist only in relation to this larger system. Individuals are relational and construct their sense of self in relation to those around them. Thus the STF takes an individual in context perspective. The individual as part of a larger system coexists with a broad contextual system which is itself composed of smaller subsystems. We have broken this broader system into two subsystems, the social system (the other people systems with which the individual interacts), and the environmental-societal system (the environment and society in which the individual lives). In presenting the STF, it is useful to represent these separately. They are represented in [Figures 9.2](#) and [9.3](#) respectively. We acknowledge the influence of the layered systems of Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) discussed in the previous chapter in the construction of the parts of our system. Thus the social system is representative of the microsystem, and the environmental-societal system is representative of the exosystem and mesosystem. While we acknowledge the pervading influence of a macrosystem of broader attitudes, cultural influences and major societal systems as identified by Bronfenbrenner, within the present framework we see these pervading each of the other systems rather than as a system which can be identified separately. Such an approach is more in keeping with the recursiveness, or recurring interaction, between the systems.

*The social system.* [Figure 9.2](#) represents the principal social influences with which individuals interact, or from which they receive input. Jepsen (1989, p. 73) commented that “an adolescent’s social environment is comprised of several primary social groups to which most adolescents belong, especially the family of origin, the several subgroups in schools such as classes and activity groups, and the peer friend group”. These groups have been termed the principal agents of socialisation by Borow (1984). Although this comment refers to adolescents, the influence of these groups is pervasive throughout life, as acknowledged in Super’s (1990) Archway Model. Similarly Vondracek and Porfeli (2002b) emphasised that “Lives are lived interdependently and ... social and historical influences are expressed through this network of shared relationships” (p. 388). Blustein and Fouad (2008) have also affirmed the “self-in-relation” notion, as has the broad relational ontology and systems theory thinking that informs this work.

Vondracek et al. (1983) identified the important contextual variables which we have categorised within the social system as community structure and size, school climate, and family context variables such as birth order and family size, maternal and paternal employment status, and paternal encouragement. These authors also highlighted the interaction between systems in emphasising that socioeconomic status and ethnicity of family are relevant influences.



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Figure 9.2 The social system.

The media has received scant attention in the career theory literature, with Jepsen (1989) being one of the few writers to identify the media as a socialising influence. In fact, it is the media through which much information from the environmental-societal system is transmitted to individuals. The media is also significant as a filter of information in terms of what it reports and how it reports. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the world so dominated by social media, the broad conceptualisation of media needs to also include social media.

In terms of career development, the workplace and education institutions may influence individuals directly or indirectly. The interaction between individual career development and employing organisations is also important and needs to be acknowledged (Amundson et al., 2002; Collin & Patton, 2009a; Hall, 1996; Herriott, 1992; Law, 1996b; Oliveira, 2000). This latter component of the social system will be explored further in chapter 14.

Each of these social structures is also the source of values, beliefs and attitudes that may be conveyed to the individual in a variety of ways. The influence of these groups can be long lasting and can vary from time to time. For example, families

act as agents of influence on children (Savickas, 2013a) and may influence values and beliefs about work as well as influence access to role models and opportunities. Changes within school curriculum, such as the inclusion of vocationally oriented programs in education institutions, can alter perceptions and opportunities of individuals. In addition, students who engage in vocational programs that take them into education and workplace environments outside the school may be less influenced by the school as a result. Similarly, career development programs instituted at an organisational level can have an impact on individual career development. Within each of these systems, formal and informal structures which incorporate mentoring arrangements may also be relevant.

The composition of the social system will change throughout life as the individual moves into and out of groups, for example changing schools or jobs or moving to a new town. On the present framework, social systems more common to all individuals have been represented. However, it is important to note that most individuals will interact with significantly more social systems, for example church groups, interest groups, service clubs, and self-help groups, which will inevitably lead to membership of different peer groups. It is also important to note that these groups may also be virtual, that is, online chat groups and other networking sites.

Thus it is essential in considering the social system of a particular individual that the exact nature of the systems within which that individual coexists is explored. The STF can serve as a starting point for this process.

*The environmental-societal system.* The individual also lives within a broader system, that of the society or the environment. The influences represented in [Figure 9.3](#) may seem less directly related to the individual, yet their impacts can be profound. Many of these influences have been highlighted in the work of a number of career writers and theorists (e.g., Collin & Young, 2000; Herr, 2008; Inkson & Elkin, 2008; Lent, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002; L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, 1996; Roberts, 2012; Roe & Lunneborg, 1990; Vondracek et al., 1986). These broader systems are also reflected within the work of the developmental systems theorists, in particular D. Ford (1987), D. Ford and Lerner (1992) and M. Ford (1992).

As seen in the reviews in chapters 2 through 4, geographic location has been underrated as an influence that may facilitate or be a barrier to career development. For example, rural isolation may influence the nature of schooling received, employment opportunities, availability of role models and access to information (Collett, 1997). The influence of geographic location can also be experienced within cities, where the “better name” of some suburbs may affect the employment opportunities of residents. Some suburbs are also better serviced than others. For example, residents’ opportunities may be restricted by limited transport to and from work and study. There is often a close link between political, socioeconomic, historical, and geographic influences in cities and in rural locations. For example, a considerable body of research has investigated the impact of low socioeconomic background on urban youth (e.g., Diemer, 2009; Diemer & Hsieh, 2008).



Figure 9.3. The environmental-societal system

Decisions of governments on issues such as social security benefits, funding for schools and universities, industrial agreements and workplace restructuring may have profound effects on individuals or the members of their immediate social system. Political and historical influences may also account for the beliefs, values and attitudes held by age cohorts, for example the values held by school leavers at times of high employment compared with those at times of high unemployment.

Inclusion of employment market in the framework provides an opportunity for employment to be seen as part of the broader life context. Although closely related to political, socioeconomic, historical and geographic influences, employment market trends can be a significant influence on the demand for tertiary courses, and can influence the curriculum of schools, colleges and universities. Increasingly the

employment market is being viewed as global, and many university and college courses are now encouraging and providing opportunities for students to study or work overseas.

Opportunities in the employment market have also been significantly affected by rapid advances in technology. Thus, technological change forges a link between employment market and historical influences. In a similar way, environmental awareness has influenced the employment market, the school curriculum and tertiary courses. Changes to the employment market such as award restructuring, enterprise agreements, the increasing number of contract positions being available over tenured positions, workplace based education and training should also be noted as significant influences on career development (Grubb, 2004). Increasing unemployment, especially for specific groups of people such as young people and the middle aged, is also an important influence in the environmental-societal system. A further group who may experience high levels of unemployment is new immigrants even if they are well qualified, a situation that has been described as a “transition penalty” (Canadian Labour and Business Centre, 2004, p. 18). Barriers to employment may include lack of work experience in their new country, limited language skills, and the transferability of qualifications. These barriers sometimes result in under-utilised skills whereby immigrants do not find work in the same occupation or field they had previously worked in. So important is this issue, that N. Arthur and Pedersen (2008) published a book focusing specifically on career counselling for international transition to which authors from a wide range of countries contributed.

Such employment market influences increase the need for ongoing career planning and lifelong learning as workers are expected to continue to upgrade and update their skills and knowledge throughout their working lives. This is related to one of the most fundamental challenges facing workers in the knowledge economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, specifically that during their working lives, individuals will have a number of jobs in a range of industries (P. S. Jarvis, 2003). Corresponding with this, educational institutions are being challenged to cater for more diverse learners and provide accessible learning programs.

The importance of acknowledging the restrictions imposed by the sociopolitical environment has been emphasised by a number of authors (Osipow, 1975; E. J. Smith, 1983; Vondracek & Fouad, 1994). The effect of these influences on people is profound and they have been included in this framework to highlight their significance. Roberts (1977, 2005, 2012) emphasised that socioeconomic influences affect the values held, education received, information obtained and observable role models.

Globalisation has been given attention in the career development literature (Andersen & Vandehey, 2012; Coutinho, Dam & Blustein, 2008; Dickmann & Baruch, 2011; Hall, 1996; L. S. Hansen, 1996; Herr, 1996b; Sweet, 2004; M. Watson & McMahon, 2012; Watts & Sultana, 2004) as well as in the broader sociology and work and change literature (Blossfield, Klijzing, Mills, & Kurz, 2005; Friedman, 1999, 2005). It is relevant in relation to changing organisations and changing workplaces, and in the broader context in which we all live. L. S.

Hansen (1996) nominated ten global issues which she sees as most relevant in the career counselling context as: “Technological Change, Environmental Degradation, Human Rights, Multiculturalism, Migration, Changing Gender Roles, Violence, World Population, Issues, Spirit and Meaning, and New Ways of Knowing” (p. 25). The effects of globalisation are far reaching, for example in the area of information about the world of work, provision of jobs available in particular areas, and in the importance of transferability of skills. Further, globalisation and technology are continuing to have unimagined and far reaching effects on our lives in relation to access to information, communication, and the process of applying for jobs and engaging in career counselling through the facilities of the internet. Such developments propose ongoing challenges for career counsellors (Andersen & Vandehey, 2012; Sampson, 2002; Watts, 2002). Rifkin (1995) highlighted the impact of the information age, and in particular digital technology, on all aspects of contemporary life. In particular, computers have overturned manufacturing organisations and either removed jobs completely, or certainly the positions that might have served as opportunities for upward mobility. Digital technology has globalised many work functions and jobs, allowing certain roles to be performed in lower waged countries and still being controlled in another country. This change has an impact in both countries, witnessed in a rising working/middle class in underdeveloped countries, and an increasing underclass in developed countries. This growing underclass is also an outcome of the reduced need for middle management in highly automated workplaces. Rifkin also emphasises that this loss of jobs is not only in manufacturing sectors, but is evident across many service sector areas. Indeed along with Rifkin (1995), Friedman (1999, 2005) has asserted that globalisation and the technological growth have worked in tandem to rearrange the workplace for a large proportion of the world’s population, in all countries, and at all levels of the workforce. Globalisation has meant the spread of free market capitalism to almost every world nation. The changing nature of work with this new world has profoundly changed the work narrative and the contract between worker and employer. In this regard, Dickmann and Baruch (2011) considered the notion of global careers and the implications for workers and for organisations and for career theory and practice. The competition for work has enhanced the interwoven connection between education credentials and workplace opportunities. Further, the competition in workplaces has enhanced the discourse of workplace stress as workers are pressured to more with less and reduced time frames. The social divide is enhanced as those in work need to work longer hours and for those without work, often the less well educated and poor, long periods of unemployment or underemployment are a reality (Blustein, 2006; Rifkin, 1995).

One of the outcomes of the changes in the world of work is the disjuncture between skills in the labour market and the skills required across all employment sectors. Scholars (e.g., Rifkin, 1995) have emphasised that new jobs will involve high level of skills, and a requirement that workers continue to update their skills as changing workplaces demand – the knowledge imperative. Writers have expressed concerns as to the level of knowledge that workers have about new knowledge and skills required (the traditional family/community sources as to

future jobs is no longer appropriate). A corollary of this concern is the increasing divide between those who have access to education/are educated and those who do not/are not. An evident outcome of the changes wrought by the twin change agents of globalisation and the information age is the increasing imperative of knowledge required for jobs. This macro-knowledge includes capacity to work with computers and the internet, literacy, problem solving and quantitative reasoning (Friedman, 2005). A number of authors (e.g., Hunt, 1995) have identified the cognitive and intellectual characteristics that will increasingly define the workplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, emphasising that workers who do not possess these characteristics will be restricted in access to workplaces of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. More recently, Andersen and Vandehey (2012) and Dickmann and Baruch (2011) have considered the implications of globalisation for career theory and practice.

### *Recursiveness*

The influences contained in the STF are representative of the multitude of influences on career development. A STF would not be complete without acknowledgment of the process of influence both within and between these systems. In our 1999 revision of the STF, we chose the systems theory term recursiveness (described in the previous chapter) over other process descriptions used throughout the literature. We have rejected the notion of reciprocal interaction which we have referred to in earlier versions of our work (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1997) as it is clear that many of the influences are not reciprocal in size or direction. The concept of triadic reciprocity defined within the work of Bandura (1986) and the social cognitive career theory (Lent, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002) remains linked to notions of causality and we believe this concept limits our thinking about the movement of the influences between and within the systems in our framework. Vondracek et al. (1986) referred to the concept of dynamic interactions in describing “the fact that complex, multidirectional relations exist between an individual and his/her context, and that changes in one of the multiple sources of development ... will influence changes in all others” (p. 187). We believe that this concept is the one which comes closest to describing the process of interaction, focusing on the multidirectionality of influence, and the relationship between all systems. The person-context relation described is therefore only that occurring at one point in time. In addition, the relation at this point in time may influence future relations in a deterministic manner. Thus interaction between person-context is viewed as a snapshot and development is seen as “a longitudinal series of snapshots” (Vondracek et al., 1986, p. 82) rather than an ongoing everchanging process.

However, we believe that recursiveness incorporates many key aspects of influences, such as their being non-linear, acausal, mutual and multidirectional, as well as including the ongoing relevance of the past, present, and future. Each of the systems and subsystems are open systems and therefore permeable to influence. Thus the broken lines in [Figure 9.4](#), indicating permeability, represent this recursive phenomenon occurring between the influences. Significantly, as the

nature of the influences changes so too does the degree of influence. The influences of the intrapersonal system are also not static, and a recursive interaction takes place between these influences as well as between them and the influences of the social and environmental-societal context. Thus in terms of practice, career development facilitators become part of the interconnected system of influences affecting the career development of individuals (described further in part three). In addition, a change in one part of the system, or in one system, produces a change in another part of the system, and individuals and their systems will experience their own recursiveness.



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Figure 9.4 Recursiveness



*Change Over Time*

It is well accepted in the literature that career development is a life-span phenomenon (Super, 1990; Savickas, 2002, 2005, 2013a; Vondracek & Porfeli, 2002a, b; Vondracek et al., 1986). Indeed the need to maintain vigilance to one's career is very much acknowledged as part of our changing world of work (see earlier this chapter). Career development involves ongoing decision-making and transition. Thus change over time refers to decision-making processes and accounts of change over time. This is shown on the Systems Theory Framework in [Figure 9.5](#) as a broader system of time within which the individual and his/her particular systems move. This circular depiction emphasises the nonlinear nature of an individual's career development process, and the integral nature of past, present, and future in the decision making and broader change process. In fact, the path of career development is one of constant evolution, and may incorporate forward and backward movements as well as movements that are multi-directional and multi-levelled. This evolution is referred to in the extant theory as "emergent career decision-making" by Super (Freeman, 1993), "successive approximations" by Holland (Freeman, 1993), and "mini-decisions" (Herr & Cramer, 1992), and is indicated by shading in [Figure 9.5](#) as change over time in the system influences.

The recursive interaction between the individual and the social and environmental-societal systems reflects the reformulation of career theory away from a basic linear model to incorporate aspects of the life cycle and changing demands of life roles (Levinson, 1978; Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982; Super, 1990). Nicholson and West (1989) maintained that traditional theories have focused too much on exploration and career entry decisions rather than on change and transitions. While linear development may have given way to a notion of sequential recurring stages, definitions of career continue to emphasise the cumulative nature of the process. The 'successful' career is still viewed as one which has advanced vertically as opposed to having moved horizontally, and the suggestion of the existence of a 'backward' career move remains in the literature. While job or career change no longer is seen to reflect career uncertainty or immaturity (e.g., Super & Knasel, 1981 rejected 'maturity' in favour of 'career adaptability'), the restrictive expectation persists that career development can be measured against time scales. More recently, Savickas (2001, 2002, 2005, 2013a) has incorporated "career adaptability" into his career construction theory to reflect individuals' readiness and resources for coping with the construction of their careers. Savickas (2001) asserted that a focus on maturity "caused career psychology to divert from contemporary developmental psychology that now focuses much more on interaction than unfolding and on contextual particulars than universal principles" (p. 304). He suggested that the term be retired and proposed the return of the term "career choice readiness".

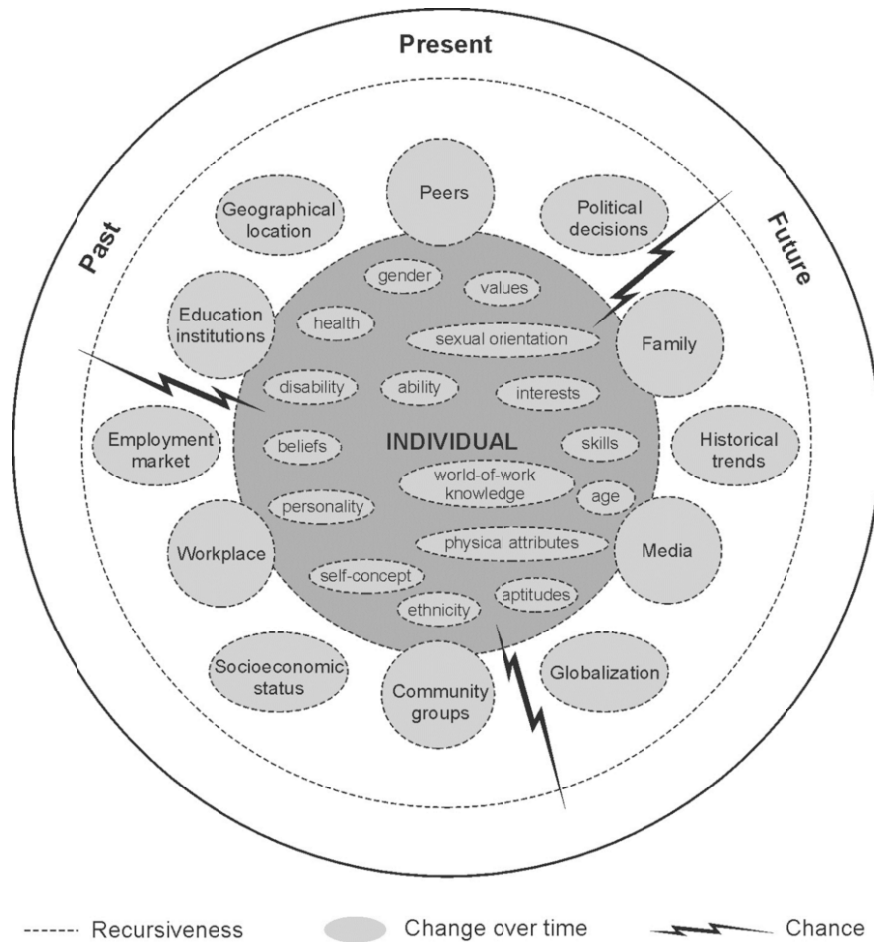


Figure 9.5 Change over time

In formulating a suggestion to address this problem, Marshall (1989) advocated the inclusion of elements of female values to career theory – “a more cyclical interpretation of phases, based in notions of ebb and flow, of shedding and renewal” (p. 285). Marshall discussed the cyclical view of personal development, where going back to retrace steps and relearn material offers new learnings because of the different place in the life pattern. She presents as a model of this pattern of career development the diversity of women’s life patterns, which reflect a “wide variety of combinations and sequences, often appearing to start afresh as they give up status in one arena to take on a novice role in another. From this perspective, the connecting thread is the individual’s life, not a building image of increasing social

status” (p. 287). This perspective is reflective of important principles and processes embedded in systems theory.

The process of career development needs to be considered in relation to the influences of stage of life and family life cycle, concepts taken from developmental psychology and family therapy respectively. Future considerations such as anticipated lifestyle and employment market trends may also influence the career development of an individual. In a statement that remains as true today as it was when it was made, Ellyard (1993) commented that

rapid technological and social change means that work skills are made redundant at increasingly fast rates. Up to 50 per cent of the skill required in the newer knowledge based industries in particular, become redundant every 3 to 5 years. In the next 20 year period 50 per cent of all job categories are likely to change. Half of these will involve job categories now existing which will disappear. The other half will involve new job categories, not yet existing which will be created. (p. 3)

Thus, to consider career development without looking forward to the emerging future is, indeed, short sighted.

The features of the changing world and its accelerating complexity and non-linearity have been well documented within the vocational psychology literature and in the organisational psychology literature (Andersen & Vandehey, 2012; M. B. Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999; Dickmann & Baruch, 2011; Herr, 1997; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; Poehnell & Amundson, 2002; see chapters 1 and 14 of the present book). Competencies acquired for one job may not serve for any period of time, work is no longer characterised by a set of tasks which are mastered once, and a career is no longer characterised by a vertical process of advancement within the one organisation. Increasingly work can be characterised as a series of periods within and outside paid employment, linked by experiences of learning and retraining. In addition these periods of paid employment may include casual work, short-term contracts and job sharing. Moreover, in these patterns of work may be enacted in careers that are constructed globally (Dickmann & Baruch, 2011). Redekopp and Day (1999) noted over a decade ago that much current work has no particular occupational title as it takes its form from the tasks required for the duration of a project, a situation that is just as relevant in the present world of work; when the project ends so does the work.

Implications of the broad process of change over time, a change which reflects the coexistence and recursive action between the individual and the broader systems, are far reaching. An individual’s lifecareer (Miller-Tiedeman, 1999; Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990) will be less predictable and will demand greater adaptability, flexibility and mobility of the individual. This is reflected in greater research attention to career adaptability (e.g., Leong & Walsh, 2012). Individuals are being challenged to play a greater role in constructing their own career development. Individuals increasingly will need to focus on employability rather than job security, and learn the skills which will assist them in taking responsibility for the direction and evolution of their own careers. This was

evidenced in a study which reported that educational attainment and measurable skills account for less than half of individual wage differences in OECD countries (OECD, 2002). The rest may be accounted for by the ability of individuals to develop, manage, and deploy their knowledge, skills and competencies. Within this changing framework, the importance of individual acceptance of lifelong learning is crucial. The role of career development facilitators in this process is also crucial. Both of these issues will be explored in detail in part three.

### *Chance*

Although unpredictable, the influence of chance can be profound, and its importance as a possible influence on career development needs to be acknowledged and included in the framework. It is represented in [Figure 9.5](#) by random flashes. Chance is defined as “an unplanned event that measurably alters one’s behavior” (M. J. Miller, 1983, p. 17), and can be referred to as luck, fortune, accident or happenstance. Very few authors have included the notion of chance in their formulations, perhaps because it is at odds with the focus of planning and control in our futures. However as discussed in chapter 4, L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990, 1996) included genetic endowments as an occurrence of chance. In addition, Vondracek et al. (1986) introduced the notion of chance in referring to the probabilistic nature of development, and hence career development. A number of authors have subsequently included chance or “planned happenstance” in their career development theoretical formulations (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; Krumboltz, 1998, 2009, 2011; Krumboltz et al., 2013; Krumboltz & Levin, 2004; L. K. Mitchell et al., 1999; Pryor & Bright, 2003a, b, 2011).

Given the complexity of influences in relation to career development, it is unreasonable to assume that the individual’s career development will always be planned, predictable or logical (Bandura, 1982). Chance can impact on any part or combination of parts of the system. For example, an accident or illness may produce a disability, a chance meeting could open up new employment prospects, and a ‘man-made’ or natural disaster could reduce or increase job opportunities. Indeed, capitalising on chance occurrences is a central tenet of the thinking behind “planned happenstance” (Krumboltz, 2009, 2011; Krumboltz et al., 2013; Krumboltz & Levin, 2004; K. E. Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999).

The broader perspective of systems theory allows for the inclusion of chance as yet another influence to be dealt with as it arises and is acknowledged. Within the systems theory perspective, however, the emphasis on chance is that it occurs only as it is perceived by the individual observer. It is constructed through the interconnectedness of the system which implies that change in one part of the system brings about change in another part of the system. However, from the perspective of an individual, the interconnectedness may not be obvious or visible, and therefore an event may be unexpected and therefore explained as a chance occurrence.

*The STF, Culture and Context*

It is clearly evident from the STF and the description of its construction, that an individual in context perspective is central to the STF and consequently to its practical applications. Although developed in a western context, the STF may be considered through cultural and contextual lenses that place their own emphasis on influences. Moreover, through an individual in context perspective, the individual's place in families, communities and society may be taken into account. This is more reflective of the self-in-relation concept (Blustein & Fouad, 2008). Despite a strong emphasis on self and the individual in western career theory (e.g., Hartung & Subich, 2011), the STF accommodates culture and context specific interpretations. Thus in collectivist cultures where the self as agent concept (Lent & Fouad, 2011) may be less appropriate, an individual in context perspective locates career decision making and career development within the context of families and communities and accommodates forms of career choice and decision making other than those vested in the individual for the individual. In depicting the individual in a recursive relationship with influences such as the socio-political system and geographic location, the STF depicts the recursive relationship between work and other roles (Blustein, 2006). Further, it allows consideration of contexts in which work is not about meaning and volition and choice may not be the reality for individuals. Because the STF may be reconstructed according to the circumstances of the individual in context (see [Figures 9.6-9.10](#)), culturally and contextually sensitive representations may be depicted.

## ADVANTAGES OF THE SYSTEMS THEORY FRAMEWORK

The STF offers several advantages that illustrate integration of career theories, and integration of theory and practice.

1. The important contribution of all career theories can be recognised.

It has been acknowledged that theorists have developed theories emphasising aspects of career development over others, and that often these aspects of career behaviour have been approached from different standpoints (Savickas, 1996a, 2002, 2013a). Many of the extant theories focus on component parts of career development, thus providing depth to what is a broad and multifaceted field. The breadth of the field of career development may preclude there ever being one overarching theory (Hesketh, 1985; Super, 1990). Regardless of whether this occurs, there will still be a need to recognise the input of the component parts and their recursive behaviour. Interestingly, Vondracek and Porfeli (2008) summarised this challenge for the field as follows:

If the study of vocational behaviour and career development is, however, to be more than a boutique enterprise at the far edge of applied science, it must get beyond antiquated theories or narrow adaptations of circumscribed or segmental models from psychology, sociology, or anthropology. It needs to

seek and eventually embrace a unifying model that fully captures and organises the complexity of human functioning and development in context. (p. 216)

While the STF offers such a unifying model, as a metatheoretical framework, it also accommodates the depth of explanation offered by other more narrowly focused theories.

2. The STF can place extant theories in the context of other theories, and their interconnections can be demonstrated.

While this advantage is related to the first one, it extends it in a subtle way. By viewing the whole picture of interconnecting influences on career development, a systems theory perspective can also recognise the interconnections between theories and view them in the context of other theory. Thus the place of all extant career development theory can be recognised, as systems theory has the capacity to provide a metatheoretical bridging framework (Savickas, 1995) for presenting a theoretical overview while acknowledging the contribution of individual theories. For example, Holland (1985a, 1992, 1997) described the categories of interests and their relationship with work environments; L. K. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990, 1996) contributed to our understanding about how these interests are formed. Social cognitive career theory (Lent, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002) describes detailed cognitive processes relevant to career decision making; and the cognitive processing model (Peterson et al., 1996, 2002; Reardon et al., 2011) describes additional metacognitive processes.

3. A systems theory perspective recognises the contribution to career development theory and practice of other disciplines.

As discussed, career development theory has been criticised for not crossing the boundaries into other disciplines (Amundson et al., 2002; M. B. Arthur et al., 1989; Collin & Young, 1986; Lent, 2001; Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982; Van Maanen, 1977; Vondracek, 2001), and therefore not capitalising on the benefits that this could bring to the advancement of the field. The STF has application both between and within disciplines, and brings with it a richness that is not available through more narrow, single focus theories. For example, in discussing the influence of family on an individual's career development, reference can be made to family therapy principles. Similarly, principles from fields such as sociology, economics and political science can be incorporated in exploring the environmental-societal system. As such, the STF offers the potential for integrating psychological and sociological theories of career, and within these broad disciplines, for example career psychology and organisational psychology (see chapter 14). Chapters 7 and 8 presented the integrative potential of developmental systems theories and the emerging field of developmental science – we acknowledge that there is increasing scope for a greater integration within the vocational psychology field, and between

this field, the STF and the evolving developments in developmental science (Lerner, 2011).

4. Systems theory brings to career development a congruence between theory and practice, and new approaches for use in career practice.

The theory practice rift was emphasised by Lent and Savickas (1994), who concluded that change theories from counselling may usefully be integrated into career interventions. Systems theory is already a well established concept in other counselling fields, for example family therapy and narrative counselling. As a result, its application to career development brings with it well established processes which can be used by practitioners. For example, the systems theory principle of intervening in one part of a system to bring about change in another part of a system is practiced in family therapy. In this regard, N. Arthur and McMahon (2005) discuss the possibilities of different levels of intervention and different roles for career counsellors who operate from the perspective of the STF. Similarly, McMahon et al. (2013) described how the STF could be used to conceptualise client issues and possible interventions. The process of intervening in an organisational system to a repatterning of relevant influences is reflected in R. Taylor's (1997) description of a university program which is designed to change career pathways of socioeconomically disadvantaged adolescents. Part three of this book will expand on the potential for integration between theory and practice facilitated by the STF. The development of qualitative career counselling practices and reflection exercises which have been based on the STF will be described.

5. The emphasis in career development is placed on the individual and not on theory. Therefore systems theory can be applicable at a macrolevel of theory analysis, as well as at a microlevel of individual analysis.

The importance of theoretical perspectives of the individual within the Systems Theory Framework was discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Using a systems theory perspective, the onus is not on the practitioner to be the expert and predict or foresee, but rather to assist individuals through dialogue to understand themselves and their own system of career influences, intrapersonal and contextual, and to construct the story of their own lives. As previously discussed, the STF assumes an individual in context perspective. As individuals make sense of and ascribe their own meaning to these contextual influences, they are assisted to construct their own career development processes and engage in action accordingly.

In addition to the macro theoretical value of the STF, it is also an important framework for the micro purpose of individual theory applicability. The STF therefore also addresses the concern raised by Richardson (1993, 1996) about the potential need for separate theories for individuals according to the diversity of their locations. She lamented the

overwhelming plurality of specific locations ... (and) the anxiety engendered by what seems to be a collapse of comforting, if limited, bodies of generalized knowledge into a confusing relativism and multiplicity of parts about which little is known or can be known. (1993, p. 429)

However, a separate theory is not necessary for each individual. As individuals are placed at the centre of their own process, they can work to identify their own meaning from the extant theories. In doing so, the complexity of the field and of the process can be reduced for both the individual and the career counsellor. Thus career counselling and career program interventions become system input for the individual to act on and process. This perspective is not too different from those advocated by Vondracek and Fouad (1994) and Solberg and colleagues (2002).

6. A systems theory perspective enables practitioners to choose from that theory which is most relevant to the needs and situation of the individual.

A systems theory perspective encourages practitioners to focus on individuals and their relevant systems and processes. Thus their approach cannot be predetermined by adherence to a single focus theory, and their reliance on a single assessment instrument or technique is likely to be reduced. Therefore, interventions are more likely to be tailored to the needs of the individual rather than the theoretical or methodological preferences of the practitioner. While theory suggests that certain theories are useful for different purposes (Krumboltz, 1994; Osipow, 1994), the integration of theory within an overarching framework can facilitate this process.

7. Systems theory offers a perspective that underlies the philosophy reflected in the move from positivist approaches to constructivist approaches.

The philosophy underlying systems theory is related to the contextualist worldview discussed in chapter 7. A significant difference between logical positivism and constructivism is that “there are no absolutes; thus, human functioning cannot be reduced to laws or principles, and cause and effect cannot be inferred” (D. Brown & Brooks, 1990b, p. 11). Thus the objectivity of a logical positivist approach which can often be supported by test results is replaced by subjectivity, for example life themes and personal meaning (e.g., Savickas, 2013a). Individuals are encouraged to define themselves and their environment, and to refer to the subjective sources of their knowledge. This philosophy has great implications for the development of career theory, and for the conduct of career counselling and career guidance, and will be further discussed in part three of this book.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF A SYSTEMS THEORY PERSPECTIVE

The proposal of a systems theory perspective and a Systems Theory Framework is not designed to compete with or devalue existing career theories. Rather, its



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significance is in its capacity to focus on individuals and their own career construction, and to unite the contributions of the various extant theories under one framework. Systems theory provides the breadth necessary to unite the theories, while the individual theories provide the depth needed to account for specific concepts. Thus systems theory and the existing theories are complementary and can co-exist compatibly. Despite the multitude of influences, it is the individual who is most important. Super (1990, p. 203) confirmed this importance, stating that: it is the individual “in whom all the personal and social forces are brought together”.

However a systems theory perspective has several implications for career theory, for our understanding of career, for career decision-making, and for the relationship between theory and practice.

### *Implications for Extant Theory*

The STF provides a sense of coherence for the myriad of influences on career development, and a sense of coherence for the many theories on career development. The framework enables their place in the system to be illustrated in relation to other theories. The framework demonstrates the recursive interaction between the theories which need no longer be viewed as discrete, disparate or segmental.

In addition, we have emphasised the value of the STF in providing a framework for integrating theory and practice by giving the individual and not the theory the central role in the career development process. Due to the uniqueness of individuals and their systems, “theories cannot be right or wrong, but only more or less useful” (Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987, p. 3).

In relation to the issues of gender, racial and ethnic groups, sexual orientation, and social class, a Systems Theory Framework provides adequate attention to the recursive nature of the interaction among the variables which influence differential opportunity structure, including psychological, economic and sociopolitical variables. In addition, a systems theory perspective acknowledges an adequate focus on the dynamic interactions between the individual and historical, social, political, economic, cultural, technological, and organisational influences in understanding career decision making and planning.

### *Implications for Our Understanding of Career*

With a focus on an interactive and non-reductionist approach to careers, a systems theory approach to understanding careers can broaden the narrowness in some existing career definitions and understandings. A practical example of this is the changed focus from ‘non-traditional careers for girls’ to reclaiming the diversity of women’s lives and fostering the development of broad choices, incorporating career roles and homemaker roles (e.g., Mainiero and Sullivan’s [2005] kaleidoscope career model [KCM] and Cook et al.’s [2002a, b] ecological model). Betz (2002) emphasised the diversity of women’s roles and also asserted that “not

all women are relationally oriented; not all women are willing to compromise their career for family reasons; not all women consider relationships in making decisions” (p. 338). The STF and its focus on the individual assist in encouraging such breadth in our understanding. Further, by considering socio-political, geographic and global influences, a systems theory approach is well positioned to accommodate non-western and developing contexts of work and career (M. Watson, 2013) and to facilitate the reconstruction of theory and practice that is culture and context relevant.

The broader context in career theory can support a focus on contextual breadth as opposed to linear depth in discussing careers. Further, a systems theory perspective of career development acknowledges the importance of the knowledges and methodologies from other disciplines in assisting our understanding of career. With the emphasis on the individual in context, a systems theory perspective allows for multiple meanings and explanations of the purpose of work and its significance to people. From a systems theory perspective, part-time work, job-sharing, homemaking, casual work, and unemployment are graphically illustrated in the STF as representative of the current constellation of influences which account for the present status of an individual’s career development. Thus, all career options can be validated and explained in terms of system influences and the meaning ascribed to them by the individual. Career could therefore be defined broadly as a life pattern determined by recursiveness of life influences. *Put simply, career could be viewed as the pattern of influences which coexist in an individual’s life over time.*

As discussed in chapter 1, a number of authors (Blustein, 2001, 2006; Collin & Watts, 1996; Herr, 1992; Miller-Tiedeman, 1999; Richardson, 1993, 2000; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013) have proposed a more flexible approach to the meaning and defining of career. The STF enables and indeed facilitates the understanding of these definitions. In addition, the nature of our times insists that we require them, as individuals need to be more flexible in their own career constructions within the many changes occurring in the systems with which they interrelate. Embedded in this need for flexibility is the concept of lifelong learning (see chapters 10 and 11), illustrated by Collin and Watts (1996) who asserted that “the concept of career needs to be reconstrued as the individual’s development in learning and work throughout life” (p. 393). Thus within the worldview which underpins systems theory and related constructivist and social constructionist approaches, career can be defined as a lifelong process with patterns and relationships between work and other areas of life being constructed within the learner in an ongoing way.

#### *Implications for the Process of Career Decision-Making*

The process of change over time is facilitated through the evolving processes of career decision-making, processes which cannot be explained in terms of models which apply to all people. Rather, career decision-making is unique to each individual. It represents the processing of information constantly being received

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from the system by a combination of conscious and unconscious processes. The components and requisite cognitive functions in career-decision making have been identified in a number of theories (Lent, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 1996, 2002; L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, 1996; Peterson et al., 1996, 2002; Reardon et al., 2011; Young et al., 1996, 2002). These processes produce subjective and objective evaluations by the individual which may or may not be able to be articulated. Practitioners may assist the career decision-making process by encouraging the individual to make connections between the many systemic influences and between the past, present and future and elaborate meaning. By taking an individual in context perspective, the STF takes account of contextual and relational forms of decision making such as may be found in collectivist cultures where the implications for people other than the individual are considered. Further it also considers the possibility that choice and volition may not be possible. Including systems theory based assumptions into theorising and researching about careers will assist in identifying how individuals learn about and make decisions within a context, that is, how the interconnections between the individual's subjective experience and their systems operate.

### *Implications for Practice*

For practitioners using the STF, the purpose of theory changes as it becomes a source of multifaceted constructs and possible related influences. The meaning of these constructs and relationships is constructed by the individual within a process facilitated by the career practitioner. Theories and assessment measures can no longer be used as predictors of development or direction, but rather to feed information into the system for processing by the individual. Individuals determine prominent themes and dominant stories relevant to their career development, and they process and make sense of these with the counsellor acting as facilitator. As such, "Knowledge or reality is constructed by the individual. Importance is not placed on events or combinations of events as much as the transformation of these events into meaningful information which is then incorporated into prior knowledge" (Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987, p. 5). Thus practitioners are encouraged to reconstruct theory and practice that is context relevant. These principles will be expanded in part three of this book.

## APPLICATION OF THE SYSTEMS THEORY FRAMEWORK

While the STF has already been depicted in this chapter, its adaptability and elasticity is more easily apparent when applied to an example of the career development of individuals at various points in their lives. The STF can be used to map an individual's career story throughout his or her career development (McMahon et al., 2005a, b; McMahon et al., 2013a, b). Individuals can be encouraged to draw the framework as they narrate the story of their career development (see chapter 13 for a description of the *My System of Career Influences* qualitative career assessment reflection instrument). By way of

illustrating its adaptability and usefulness as a tool for career development facilitators, we offer an example of the application of the framework to one individual's life (further discussion of the use of the STF as a qualitative assessment process can be found in chapter 13).

The example presented here is that of the career development of a man who grew up in a rural area during the 1970s. This individual came from a low income family where neither parent had completed secondary schooling, and they struggled to provide for their young family. The individual, the eldest child of the family, reached the end of compulsory schooling which was not available locally because the government education department had closed the senior secondary school due to low student numbers. Postcompulsory secondary education would have necessitated either a two hour bus trip morning and night to a neighbouring town or boarding in that town, an option which was not viable for the family because of the young person's age and their financial situation. Another alternative was to complete postcompulsory schooling through distance education via correspondence. While the young person performed well and was motivated to continue at school, the family decided for financial reasons that the offer of a secure job with a company in the town was the best option. It was the parents' hope that this good job would mean that life would not be such a struggle for the young person as it was for them. The company recognised the ability and potential of their new employee, and supported him to complete his secondary schooling by correspondence courses. They allowed some time for exams and study.

Figure 9.6 depicts the dominant influences on the young man's career development at school leaving age. While all influences are present in his system of influences, some are more influential than others at this point in time. For this young person, the transition from secondary school to beyond was influenced to a large extent by age, gender, ability, socioeconomic status, family, geographical location, the employment market, and political decisions.

Once the young man completed secondary education, promotional opportunities became available in the company. The young man's family considered him old enough to leave home, and was encouraged by the future promised by the company. Mobility was not a problem for him, as he had no ties and was able to take advantage of job opportunities in a number of other locations. While he was not participating in formal education, he regularly participated in in-service training provided by the company. In addition, a senior executive of the company recognised his potential and took him 'under his wing'. Thus ten years after leaving school, the young man was on a promotional track.

This is illustrated in Figure 9.7. While some of the same influences remain dominant, they have changed over time. For example, geographic influences are still significant, but are now related to the individual's mobility and the opportunities associated with that, whereas previously geographic location restricted opportunities. New influences have emerged such as the employer who is acting as a mentor. The individual continues to learn. However, this occurs less formally through experience in the company and company in-service training. Thus

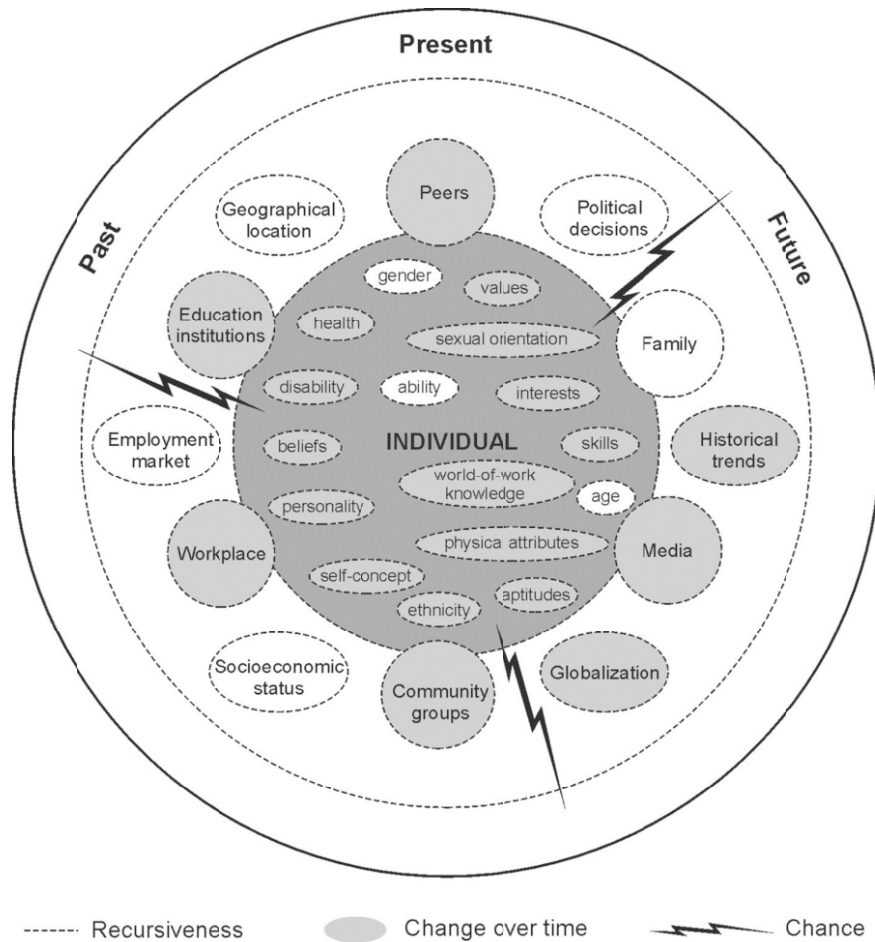


Figure 9.6 Dominant influences at school-leaving age

knowledge of the world of work has increased and resulted in several promotional opportunities. Until this point the individual has followed a traditional vertical path of career development.

During the next ten years the individual continued working for the company which had established branches in several overseas countries. As a result the individual had been able to spend extended periods of time overseas with responsibility for establishing new branches and liaising with other companies. However, during this time he had also married and was in the position of having a young family and not wanting to travel as much. The decision to spend more time with the family resulted in more limited promotional opportunities within the same

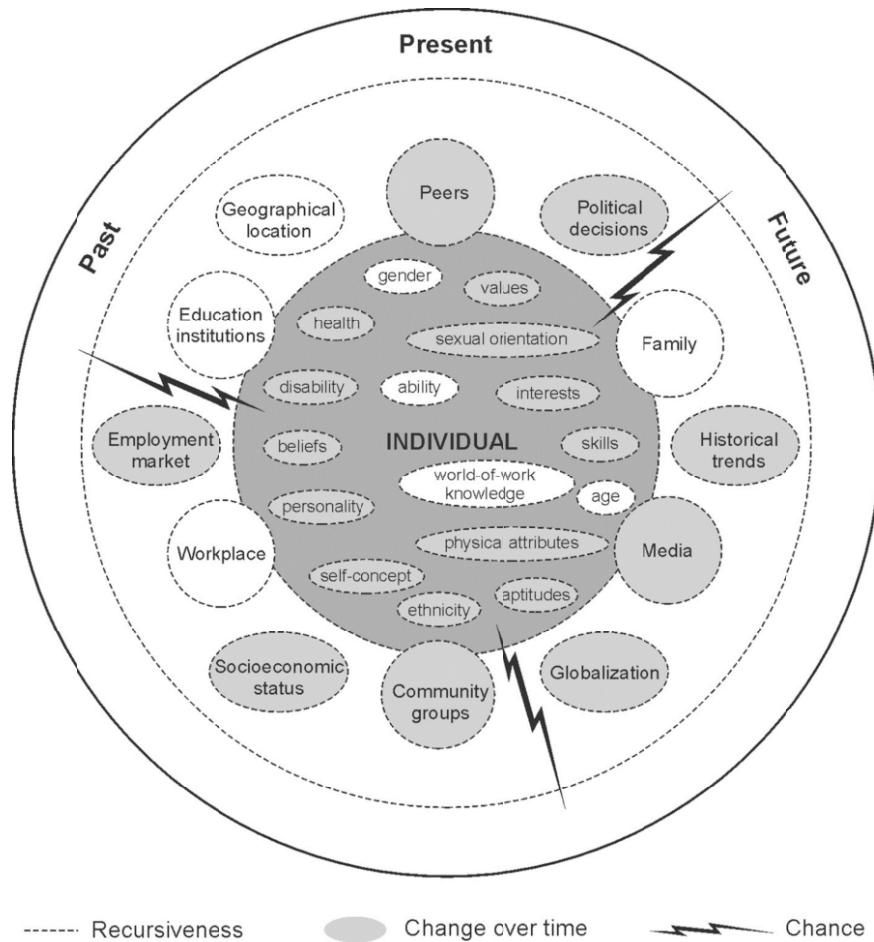


Figure 9.7 Dominant influences 10 years after leaving school

company. Working for the company was now less satisfying as others, less senior than him, were in the decision-making positions. In addition, he had identified several satisfying and challenging aspects of his work in which he wanted to specialise. Since he was based in a large city and travelling less, he enrolled in part-time study. He was beginning to feel less secure in the company as it began restructuring its operations. In addition, he was feeling less satisfied with work and was beginning to think about opportunities outside the company. However, he felt limited by the financial constraints of a mortgage and raising a family.

Figure 9.8 illustrates the constellation of influences 20 years after leaving school. Learning has continued both formally and informally, although the individual feels that his career has plateaued. Globalisation has emerged as an

influence. Family has re-emerged as a dominant influence, although its nature is different. The individual has defined his interest area more clearly and realises how much he values having some control over his work.

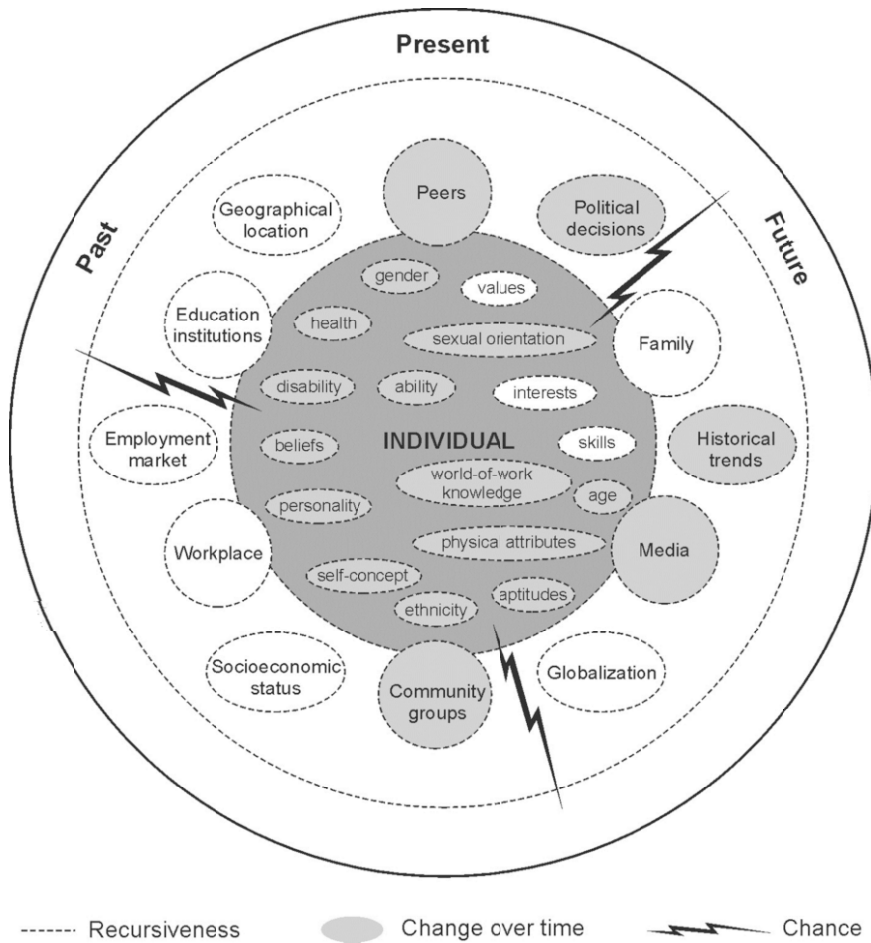


Figure 9.8 Dominant influences 20 years after leaving school

As restructuring in the company continued, the opportunity arose for the individual to work on a permanent part-time basis. This provided both a sense of security as well as the opportunity to explore other work options, such as contract work. Peer networks and professional contacts developed throughout his working life enabled him to secure several contracts, and he was now committed to building his own business and enjoyed the challenge and decision making associated with that. The specialised nature of the contract work provided a sense of satisfaction

because it was of great interest to him as he was now feeling secure in the knowledge that if he was made redundant or offered a voluntary early retirement package, he had other options.

Figure 9.9 represents the constellation of influences thirty years after leaving school. The influence of family remains constant. While security has always been an important value for the individual, the importance of other values such as challenge and responsibility are now highlighted. The pattern of career development has changed and is no longer tied to a vertical path through an organisation.

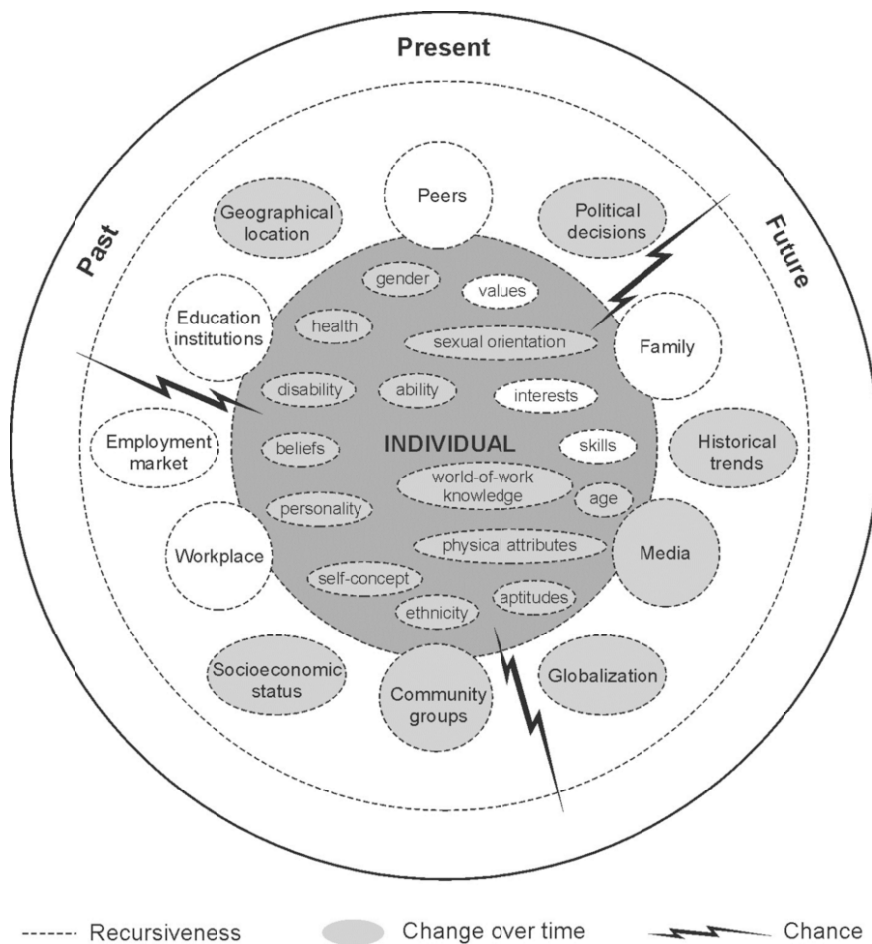


Figure 9.9 Dominant influences 30 years after leaving school



Subsequently, the opportunity arose for the individual to take a redundancy package from the company which he did, secure in the knowledge that his own business was now well established. He had employed a small staff to cope with the volume of work and felt confident in their ability to manage his business when he was absent. His wife had retired and he enjoyed spending time with her and also visiting his grandchildren who lived in another city. His parents had recently moved from their rural home to an aged care facility in the city where he lived and he was aware that their care needs were increasing and he wanted to assist them as much as possible. He had developed a passion for a voluntary environmental organisation he had joined. He felt he was making contribution to society through this work and wanted to devote more time to it. While he was not ready to retire, he was ready to work in a more part-time capacity. He felt he had enough to do until he fully retired in a few more years when he would be in a more financially secure position.

Figure 9.10 depicts the constellation of influences on the individual's career 40 years after leaving school. Family remains a dominant influence although the nature of his family has changed to include grandchildren. In addition his relationship with his parents is changing as he assumes more of a carer role. Geographical location has emerged as an important consideration again as his grandchildren live in another city. Socioeconomic circumstances have re-emerged as a more important influences as he contemplates his retirement.

Thus throughout the individual's life the STF has been able to account for his career development. The constellation of dominant influences has varied, and the degree to which the influences have impacted on his life has changed. In addition the nature of the influences has changed over time. It can be clearly seen that the influences cannot be construed as negative or positive, but rather as push or pull factors in relation to certain decisions and the individual's career path.

#### *Systems Theory Constructs Applied*

The previous example illustrates how the STF can be a useful tool for understanding the complexity of influences operating in the career development of an individual over several decades. It is also useful to illustrate the constructs of systems theory previously discussed in chapter 8. Each of the constructs will be presented here.

*Wholes and parts.* The frameworks depicted in Figures 9.6 to 9.10 present a picture of the whole system of which the individual system is a part. To separate a part from the whole would lead to a misleading picture of the individual's options. For example, at school leaving age consideration of the individual system only and the interests and abilities of the individual would suggest that he continue at school. To combine the evidence from this part of the system with evidence from another part, that is his future ambitions, continuation at school would seem even more logical. However, when the information from these parts (subsystems) is

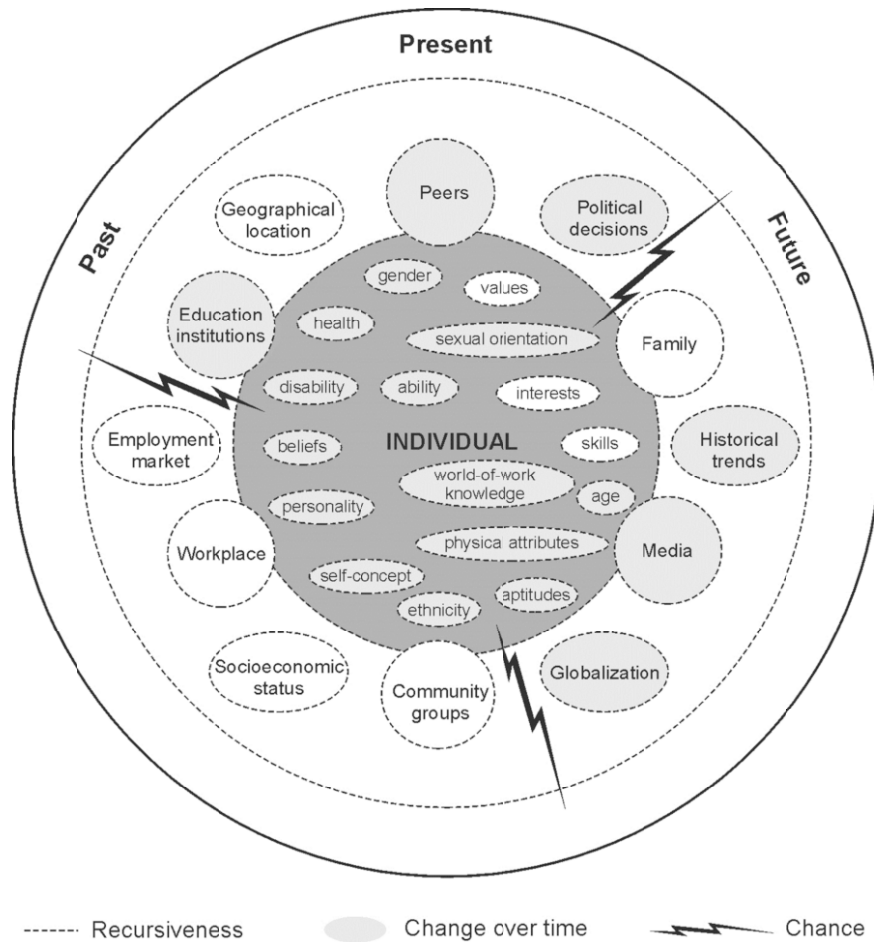


Figure 9.10 Dominant influences 40 years after leaving school

considered in conjunction with information from the whole system, in particular the social system and the environmental-societal system, the individual's continuation at school is less logical, although still an option. Thus it can be seen that to operate on information from less than the whole system of influences can be potentially misleading.

*Patterns and rules.* In the family depicted in Figure 9.6, there is no pattern of individuals continuing to postcompulsory education even though there are no family rules precluding it. However, there is an established pattern of a solid work ethic which is closely related to the family role and a related emphasis on family

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values and security. Although the individual depicted in the example followed a significantly different career path from that of either parent, he maintained the established pattern of hard work and the importance of his family role. In addition, security remained as an important value throughout his career.

*Acausality.* While it is easy to identify significant points in the career development of the individual depicted in the example, it is not easy to identify the exact reason for the outcome. For example, not continuing at school cannot be attributed solely to the family's socioeconomic circumstances. Geographic location, political decisions, age, employment market, the individual's motivation and ability, and family influences all played a part. Thus, the decision to take up an offer of a job and transition from school to work cannot be accounted for by a causal or linear explanation such as 'he did not continue because the family could not afford it'. Similarly, his transition to retirement is best accounted for by fully considering the many systems of influence on his life. The nature of these transitions in the individual's career reflects the many interrelated influences operating at the time of the decision in the system of the individual.

*Recursiveness.* The previous explanation also illustrates the recursiveness which occurs within and between the elements of a system. The ever-present influences of the framework are interrelated and therefore act on each other. Thus there is a mutuality of influence. However, as an influence changes, its degree of influence on other elements of the system also changes. For example, the degree of influence of globalisation on the individual during his early life was not marked. However, as globalisation grew, new opportunities opened up for the company, and in turn for the individual. Thus the company and in turn, the individual, participated in globalisation through expansion in other countries. While there is a mutuality of influence, the degree of influence is not reciprocal. Rather, a recursive pattern of interaction occurs.

*Discontinuous change.* Globalisation is an example of discontinuous change. Another is the change in the family system of the individual. For example, discontinuous change occurred when the individual left home, again when he married, again when he had children, and again when he became a grandparent. In each case, the system, while still a system, would not be the same again.

*Open and closed systems.* The previous discussion on the application of the STF illustrates the permeability of the boundaries of each of the subsystems which are open to influence from other subsystems. For example, the individual system was influenced by the social system influence such as family and the workplace, and by environmental-societal system influences such as the employment market in a global world and socioeconomic and geographic circumstances. This illustrates the

operation of an open system, that is, a system that is open to input from the surrounding systems. Closed systems are not open to such input and have impermeable boundaries.

*Abduction.* Previously, the family values of hard work, security, and family values were discussed as a pattern of living shared by the individual and his parents. Abduction is a process of reasoning by examining patterns and relationships. Thus, the individual's values did not just occur. They can be related to patterns within his family of origin. Similarly, the career pattern of the individual thirty years after leaving school did not just occur. Rather it reflects changing patterns in the nature of work, the organisation of business and industry, and fulfillment of the individual's own needs. In considering retirement, the individual is demonstrating values that reflect a pattern of living and working throughout his life. Abductive reasoning looks for patterns and relationships between the individual's system of operating and interrelated systems, for example, the family or the employment market.

*Story.* In order to understand these patterns and relationships, counsellors encourage individuals to tell their story, for example, to tell stories about what life was like growing up, family attitudes to work, work history, and how they have coped with change in their lives. Through story, patterns and relationships can be derived and interconnection forged between previously unconnected events in an individual's life. Story also enables patterns and relationships to be forged between the rich system of influences on the individual. Through story, individuals construct their own meaning about experiences and their own reality. As reflected in the application of the STF in the previous example, it is evident that the STF can be useful in assisting individuals to tell their stories.

#### *The Individual as a Learning System*

As evidenced in [Figures 9.6 to 9.10](#), all systemic influences are brought together in the individual. Individuals are participants in their systems as both receivers of input from and contributors of input to their systems. As individuals interact with the other elements of the system, they collect new information. This is combined with previous information to form new knowledge. Thus the individual can be viewed as a learning system (see chapter 10). The creation of knowledge is a process which resides within the individual and is an emergent process influenced by language, time, place and culture. For example, throughout this individual's career development, learning and the creation of knowledge were ongoing. Sometimes the influences on learning were overt such as participating in a course of study, and sometimes they were covert, such as the development of family values although they may never have been discussed or taught. At times the input was formal education such as school or university study, and at times it was informal, such as observations about work, life experience, recognition of personal

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preferences, and input from the media or mentors. As a result, the individual learned about himself as well as the world of work at a general level and specifically in terms of interest areas. Any individual's learning creates a unique perspective or worldview which is reality for that individual and may differ from the reality of other individuals.

Thus, the use of systems theory thinking challenges traditional ways of knowing, and opens up the possibility of multiple perspectives. This is reflected in the many perspectives on career development presented in the career theories. Many theorists have constructed individual worldviews on career development. Individually, they represent parts of a complex system. However, as evidenced with the example of the application of the STF to the career development of an individual, the parts need to be viewed in relation to the whole. Thus systems theory thinking with its focus on the whole has much to offer our understanding of career development at both practical and theoretical levels.

## CONCLUSION

Using systems theory, "elements of the social, personal, and economic situation within which individuals operate may be more explicitly analyzed, and the relationships of the larger systems to one another may be more clearly understood than in the traditional approaches to behavior, which tend to emphasize only one major segment of the individual or the environment" (Osipow, 1983, p. 320). Thus systems theory provides an opportunity to develop a framework to represent the complex interrelationships of the many influences on career development.

A systems theory perspective also addresses many of the criticisms of career theory. It represents a conceptual move to provide a metatheoretical framework for integrating existing theories, and also theory and practice. It offers a framework for the blending of what different disciplines can bring to career theory, and a congruence between theory and practice applicable to all individuals which did not previously exist. The application of the STF in integrating theory and practice within the crucible of the individual will be developed further in part three.

# **PART 3**

## **SYSTEMS THEORY AND CAREER PRACTICE**

### **CHAPTER 10**

LIFELONG CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING:  
A FOUNDATION FOR CAREER PRACTICE

### **CHAPTER 11**

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION:  
CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING SYSTEMS

### **CHAPTER 12**

CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING IN SCHOOL SYSTEMS

### **CHAPTER 13**

CAREER COUNSELLING SYSTEMS

### **CHAPTER 14**

ORGANISATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL CAREER SYSTEMS:  
NEW RELATIONSHIPS

## **LIFELONG CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING: A FOUNDATION FOR CAREER PRACTICE**

As discussed in parts one and two of this book, debates about the integration or convergence of career theories and the need for contemporary and relevant theory continue (S. D. Brown & Lent, 2005; Harris-Bowlsbey, 2003; Hartung, Walsh, & Savickas, 2013; Patton & McMahon, 2006b; Savickas & Lent, 1994). Similarly, debate has ensued about the integration of career theory and career practice (Hartung et al., 2013; Patton & McMahon, 2006a; Savickas & Walsh, 1996). Through the application of a systems theory perspective, part two of this book established that theory integration can be forged within the individual. It is the individual within and by whom application of career theory is made and integration occurs. The individual also provides the unifying theme in practice, and can be seen as the crucible for the integration of theory and practice. Using a systems theory perspective, individuals are central to career development practice as they are the constructors of their own careers.

Reflecting the individual's role in career construction, Knowdell (1996) drew on a transport metaphor to illustrate the changes confronting career decision makers since the 1950s. He described the 1950s career as a ride on a train along steady and stable tracks to a particular destination. By the 1970s, as the nature of the world of work began to change, the metaphor of a journey on a bus was more appropriate in that buses may respond to changing traffic conditions, change routes along the way or even change destinations. However the bus schedule was still largely determined by the bus company. In considering careers and work in the 21st century, Knowdell continued his metaphor and suggested that the appropriate vehicle is the "all terrain vehicle" (p. 184) because it places individuals in the driving seat to "take the controls and 'drive' his/her own unique career toward success" (p. 184).

Knowdell's metaphor is reflected in widespread acceptance that career is not synonymous with job and occupation. Rather careers are more commonly viewed as the creations of individuals, an observation that has gained increasing credence as the world of work has continued to change rapidly and constructivism and social constructionism have become more influential in career theory and practice (Patton & McMahon, 2006a). Careers are widely viewed more as processes (e.g., Chen, 1998) rather than as constructs. As such, careers are not only found in hierarchical organisations and may occur laterally, vertically, inside and outside organisations. Individuals are viewed as active agents in the construction of their careers (L. Cochran, 1997; Peavy, 2004; Patton & McMahon, 2006a; Savickas, 2013a) and should consider themselves as self-employed (Collin & Watts, 1996). They are expected to manage their own careers (P. S. Jarvis, 2003; Savickas, 1997a, 2013a).

Individuals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are expected to develop career management skills (CMS) that include managing their learning across the lifespan (Sultana, 2012b). Such skills are often described conceptually more than empirically supported (Sultana, 2012b) and have been reflected in long established models such as the DOTS model (Law, 1999; Law & Watts, 1977) and more recently in the blueprint frameworks developed in countries such as Canada (National Life/Work Centre, n.d.) and Australia (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA], 2010).

The comparatively recent development of blueprint frameworks has reinforced career development's long-term relationship with learning that has been present since the days of Parsons (1909). In a context of rapid labour market change, career development learning and the acquisition of career management skills has been associated with employability and lifelong learning. This association has resulted in greater policy interest in career guidance and counselling (e.g., OECD and European Commission, 2004) because of its potential to contribute to the "public good" as well as to the "individual good" (Watts & Sultana, 2004) which remains the traditional and primary focus of the field. Specifically, career guidance and counselling may contribute to public policy goals related to more efficient education and training systems, the labour market and social inclusion by assisting individuals in their lifelong learning decisions (Watts, 2003, 2005, 2008). Thus the context (i.e., the environmental-societal system) of career development has changed for individuals and for career theorists, researchers and practitioners. This context in conjunction with more contemporary conceptualisation of the centrality of individuals in the career construction process bring significant challenges to the way in which traditional career development practices need to be conceptualised and conducted.

It is the intention of this chapter to set the scene for part three of this book. In particular it examines the changing environmental-societal context in which career development and career development practice occur. It advocates the importance of lifelong learning if individuals are to construct satisfying careers for themselves. Using lifelong learning as a central theme, it draws attention to the need to rethink career practices and to the traditional role of career practitioners. All chapters in part three are presented through the filters of learning and systems theory thinking. Where appropriate, practical examples of the application of the Systems Theory Framework are provided. Throughout part three, the terms career guidance and career development are used interchangeably to respect their usage in various countries. For example, career guidance is the term more commonly used in the European context, whereas career development is more commonly used in the North American and Canadian contexts.

Chapters 11, 12, 13, and 14 focus on specific aspects of lifelong learning. Chapter 11 discusses the establishment of learning systems using the examples of training of career counsellors and supervision. In chapter 12, the focus is on career development learning in school systems. Chapter 13 discusses the facilitation of lifelong career development learning through career counselling, and chapter 14 focuses on organisational psychology's role in career development learning.



## THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF CAREER SERVICES

Over two decades ago, the work environment was described as “turbulent” (Lester, 1996, p. 193; Mirvis & Hall, 1996 p. 72) and as “harsh and challenging” (Jones, 1996, p. 453), descriptions that are as applicable today as they were then. Gone is the security of tenure and permanent employment experienced by many workers in previous eras. The traditional concept of a ‘job for life’ has become less common and now co-exists with many forms of less stable employment (Savickas, 2008b; Watts, 1996a) that produce an environment of uncertainty and constant change. The employment market has witnessed increasing growth in the number of self-employed, part time, and contingent (short term contract or casual) workers and teleworkers, and a trend toward larger numbers of people who are becoming unemployed or underemployed. The emergence of a society where approximately one third of people are privileged and in a reasonably secure form of employment, one third are unemployed and the other one third are marginalised and insecure has been suggested. Moreover, the rapid advances of globalization and technology have resulted in a global workforce (e.g., Dickmann & Baruch, 2011) comprising those employed by multinational companies, immigrant and migrant workers, and workers who telecommute. Globalisation is being driven by national and international deregulation and the communications revolution (Houghton & Sheehan, 2000), and has fostered a highly competitive market characterised by high levels of mobility of capital, workers, and jobs (Dickmann & Baruch, 2011; Saunders & Maxwell, 2003) and an economic structure that is referred to as the knowledge economy (Houghton & Sheehan). Innovation, education and learning are critical in the emerging world of work.

In the global world of work organisations are constantly exposed to change and are therefore less willing to make long term commitments to individuals (see chapter 14 for a further discussion). As a result job security is more likely to rest on marketable skills rather than on job seniority or on the paternalism of a company. Security now lies in employability rather than in employment (e.g., Watts, 2005). As far back as 1996, Knowdell observed that “the days when the young entry level worker, with little education, went to work for a company, learned and mastered their product and lived ‘happily after’” are gone (p. 187). By comparison, workers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century can expect to “experience a succession of jobs in a number of industry sectors during their working lives” (P. S. Jarvis, 2003, p. 1), experience times of underemployment and unemployment, and to regularly engage and re-engage in learning to update their skills and knowledge in order to remain employable. While some job changes will be voluntary and initiated by individuals themselves as they self-manage their careers, others will not be voluntary and will be brought about by factors such as downsizing, restructuring and outsourcing. Thus workers find themselves in a ‘foreign’ world of work, facing a complex array of issues for which many are ill-prepared. To some extent this stems from the changing nature of the relationship between organisations and workers from one based on tenure and mutual loyalty to one based on economically driven short term contracts. Most individuals will not only have to find and hold a job once, they will

have to do it repeatedly during their lifetime. As a result, workers can no longer rely on the same beliefs, skills and values to be successful and satisfied in their careers.

The relationship between individuals and the environmental-societal context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world of work illustrates the recursiveness of the influences of the Systems Theory Framework. For example, there is growing awareness of the recursiveness between individuals, their work experiences, and mental and physical health, family responsibilities and life options, and government policy. Career development issues such as work/life balance, balancing work and family roles, discrimination, harassment, workplace stress, rapidly outdated skills and knowledge, the need to repeatedly engage in learning, transition to retirement and international transition are broadening the potential scope of career practice away from its original focus on career choice. Against this backdrop of an irreversibly changed world of work, individuals are now expected to engage in a “lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future” (National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards, 2004). More recently, career theory and practice has emphasised self-construction (e.g., Guichard, 2009) and life design (e.g., Savickas, et al., 2009) in the context of societal transition. It is predicted that individuals may access career guidance and counselling services several times in a lifetime to assist them with repeated career decision making, career transition, and with their lifelong learning needs. In this context, there have been calls internationally for individuals to have access to lifelong career guidance (e.g., Council of the European Union, 2004; European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training [Cedefop], 2008).

The changing context of career development is largely a result of globalisation, yet practitioners may question why they should concern themselves with globalisation. However, the effects of globalisation influence practice in many ways such as the exchange of goods and personal and knowledge based services, the movement of people, and knowledge exchange (Paredes, Choi, Dipal, Edwards-Joseph, Ermakov, Gouveia, et al., 2008). Thus an understanding of the influence of globalisation will assist counsellors to conceptualise their work and also to assist their clients whose careers are also impacted by it. Career development facilitators of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must re-conceptualise their work in order for the discipline to remain relevant. This is not however the first time that the field has required revisioning. Savickas (2008b) describes four eras of career development practice from mentoring in agricultural communities between 1850 and 1899, to vocational guidance between 1900 and 1949 in response to the advance of industrialisation in cities, to career counselling in the “corporate societies” (p. 105) of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to self-construction in the global society of the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He contends that each era brought with it new challenges for individuals that required the field to reinvent itself. The move to self-construction has been accompanied by a shift towards narrative practices that emphasises the notion of career as story (Hartung, 2013a).

Reconceptualising career development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is however, occurring in the context of a more global and international discipline that has been adopted and adapted in many countries outside its western origins in the United States and Europe. To date, contemporary revision of career development (e.g., Hartung, 2013a; Savickas, 2008a, b, 2013a) remains primarily western in its emphasis and therefore open to longstanding criticism about its appropriateness for those who are not white, middle class and western (M. Watson, 2013). For example, in countries where subsistence conditions, high unemployment, and collectivism are characteristic western career theories and models that emphasise individualism and self-construction may be of limited value (Leung & Yuen, 2012; Mkhize, 2012; D. Thomas & Inkson, 2007; M. Watson, 2013). Dickmann and Baruch (2011) emphasise that national, institutional and cultural contexts are very important in the context of global careers. Further, even within western countries, the relevance of career development as it is presently conceptualised to many individuals who fall outside the white, middle class and western tradition is uncertain (Blustein, 2006; see chapter 6). While some attention has been afforded to the challenges facing career development in a global world (e.g., Andersen & Vandehey, 2012; Dickmann & Baruch, 2011; McMahon & Yuen, 2010; M. Watson & McMahon, 2012), more is needed.

Historically the delivery of career services has been primarily to assist school leavers transition from education to further learning or the labour market and to assist unemployed people to return to work (Watts, 2008) primarily in western countries. Career services have not traditionally been provided for all citizens. Watts and Fretwell (2004) suggested that such traditional service provision is driven by a “reactive rationale” (p. 8) that can no longer be countenanced. Essentially career services were provided in response to a perceived need or problem (Watts, 2008). For example, they were provided to prevent school leavers from becoming unemployed or not engaged in further education and training or to remediate the problem of unemployment to prevent it reoccurring (McCarthy, Meade, Coyle, & Darbey, 2001). An Australian study however, investigating models for providing appropriate learning and career guidance to disengaged adults highlighted the remedial approach as an obstacle for these individuals and suggested a proactive approach underpinned by the ability for early intervention would be more appropriate (Beddie & Lorey, 2004).

Career guidance services have been slow to change from their traditional role of providing services related to occupational choice (Wijers & Meijers, 1996). Within the context of lifelong learning and individuals being regarded as self-managers of their careers, there is a need for the provision of career services to be informed by a “proactive rationale” (Watts & Fretwell, 2004, p. 8) whereby all citizens have lifelong access to career guidance. A proactive rationale is evidenced by the International Labour Organisation’s (2004) recommendation to its members that they should assure and facilitate participation in and access to vocational and career information and guidance, job placement services and job search techniques and training support services for individuals throughout their lives. Further evidencing the “proactive rationale”, the Council of the European Union (2004)

regard career guidance as a key component of education, training and employability strategies and resolved that career guidance

Services need to be available at times and in forms which will encourage all citizens to continue to develop their skills and competences throughout their lives, linked to changing needs in the labour market. Such services need to be viewed as an active tool, and individuals should be positively encouraged to use them. (p. 6)

The emergence of the proactive rationale informing career guidance policy is evidence that for over a decade the value of career guidance to individuals and to society has been recognised (Watts, 1996a, b, 1999a, b). Career practitioners and policy makers have begun forming closer links and a number of international symposia have been held, most recently in 2012, to create stronger links between career development and public policy (e.g., Bezanson & O'Reilly, 2002; Hiebert & Bezanson, 2000). For more than two decades authors have advocated the benefits of career guidance to public policy (e.g., Bimrose & Wilden, 1994; L. S. Hansen, 1996; Herr, 1992; Krumboltz, 1996; Savickas, Van Esbroeck, & Herr, 2005; Sultana, 2012b, 2013; Watts, 2008; Watts & Sultana, 2004).

Increasingly the provision of career guidance services is being viewed as a “sociopolitical instrument for advancing national goals” (Savickas et al., 2005, p. 83). Internationally career guidance is higher on the public policy agenda than ever before. Much is known about the policy and delivery of career guidance (Watts, 2005) as a result of international reviews of career guidance services commissioned by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2004), the World Bank (Watts & Fretwell, 2004), and the European Commission (Sultana, 2004), all of which have been synthesised by Watts and Sultana (2004). Indeed, so important is career guidance to policy makers that the OECD and the European Commission jointly published *Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers* (OECD/European Commission, 2004) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published the *Handbook on Career Counselling* (UNESCO, 2002) as a follow up to the World Conference on Higher Education to assist organisations in developing countries establish career counselling services in higher education settings. However the sociopolitical nature of career guidance remains, and recent policy and infrastructure changes in the United Kingdom leading to changes in service provision (Roberts, 2013; Watts, 2013) emphasise the need to remain active in the policy arena.

The “proactive rationale” challenges career development to not only expand access and services to include a lifespan focus on a broad range of career management issues, but also to transform its provision to include more diverse methods and sources of delivery including self-help approaches that include the use of information and communication technologies (Amundson, 2006; OECD, 2004; Watts, 2003, 2008). Such transformation also requires critical reflection on the extant theory and practices that are predominantly North American and Eurocentric in focus, and the development of approaches that are more reflective of the nations and cultures of the clients they serve (e.g., Leung & Yuen, 2012; Mkhize, 2012;

Savickas, 2003; M. Watson, 2013; M. Watson & Stead, 2002) and on the professional standards, training and qualifications of career practitioners (N. Arthur, 2008; D. Hughes, 2013b; Schiersmann, Ertelt, Katsarov, Mulvey, Reid, & Weber, 2012; Watts, 2008).

A further challenge is the great need for empirical evidence that attests to the outcomes and benefits of career guidance services (D. Hughes, 2011; D. Hughes & Gration, 2009; Watts, 2003, 2005; Whiston, 2011). There is evidence about the positive impact of short-term outcomes of career guidance related to learning, attitudes and motivation (Bimrose, Barnes, & D. Hughes, 2005; Bimrose, Barnes, Hughes, & Orton, 2004; Bysshe, D. Hughes, & Bowes, 2002; Whiston & Buck, 2008). However evidence is still needed of its long-term economic impact and organisations need to develop better approaches to gathering impact data (D. Hughes & Gration, 2009; Whiston, 2011). Thus while it seems likely that career development services will have a raised profile in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the maintenance of that profile is dependent on these significant challenges being addressed.

#### CONSUMERS OF CAREER SERVICES

It is clear from the previous discussion that to continue the restricted provision of career guidance services to the traditional client groups in traditional settings such as schools is no longer adequate. Career guidance and counselling is essential for all individuals across their life-spans (Collin & Watts, 1996; Council of the European Union, 2004; Herr, 1992; Watts, 2005), and at a reasonable cost. In this global world, an increasingly diverse client group will present as consumers of career guidance and counselling services.

Chapter 6 drew attention to the career development needs of a range of groups such as women, racial and ethnic groups, gay men and lesbians, and people with disabilities who have traditionally been afforded little attention in career theory and whose career issues have not yet been sufficiently theorised. The needs of unemployed and underemployed people (Blustein, 2006; Patton, 1996) and people from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Roberts, 2005, 2012) also need to be taken into account in career development practice. A further neglected group who have been overlooked in practice is children despite early intervention through career learning having the potential to provide a firm foundation for the career decisions of adolescence and adulthood (Porfeli & Lee, 2012; Skorikov & Patton, 2007a; M. Watson & McMahon, 2007). With increased mobility between countries, emerging groups who also have been afforded little attention in career theory are refugees and migrants. There is evidence that new immigrants experience high levels of unemployment even if they are well qualified and that support for people experiencing international transition is required (N. Arthur, 2012; N. Arthur & Pedersen, 2008). A further emerging client group is to be found in non-western countries and cultures and developing country contexts where career development is also extending its reach. Imposing western middle class models in such contexts is inappropriate and there have been calls for the development of indigenous approaches (e.g., Arulmani, 2010a, b; Leong & Pearce, 2011; Leung & Yuen,

## CHAPTER 10

2012; McMahon & Yuen, 2010; Mkhize, 2012; M. Watson, McMahon, Mkhize, Schweitzer & Mpofu, 2011) with Arulmani (2011) explaining that “a given culture has been already prepared in a certain way to engage with work, occupation and career” (p. 92). He encourages career practitioners to learn from other cultures in order to deliver context resonant services and proposed a cultural preparedness approach that contextualizes career interventions for local contexts. With the advance of information and communication technologies, another client group is emerging who access career guidance online. In this regard, an important consideration is that online services may be accessed and provided across countries and cultures. Such diverse client groups and practice settings evidences the need to regard all career guidance and counselling as multicultural with culture being located centrally in practice (N. Arthur & Collins, 2005, 2010; Arulmani, 2010b, 2011; Collins & N. Arthur, 2010a, b; Stead, 2004).

As discussed in Chapter 2, individuals will face different developmental tasks at various stages across the lifespan and thus the services they require at different points during their career development will vary. For example, presenting issues may vary from transition from school, to acquiring entry level skills, to retraining, coping with redundancy or underemployment, to parenting, workplace stress or transition to retirement. The changing nature of the client population also means that career development services will need to be provided in a variety of settings including work settings, community agencies, places of employment including businesses and industries, universities, as well as the traditional location in schools (Watts, 2005) and online. This breadth of services and settings is reflected in the Canadian Career Development Foundation’s (2002) definition of career development services as the “wide range of programs and services provided in many different jurisdictions and delivery settings. Their object is to assist individuals to gain the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to manage their life, learning and work in self-directed ways”.

### LIFELONG LEARNING

As evidenced in the discussion throughout this chapter, in chapter 9, and later in chapter 14, consumers of career development services may be regarded as lifelong learners. Prior to considering lifelong learning it is important to consider learning itself. Illeris (2007) describes learning as “any process that for living beings leads to a durable change of capacity and is not caused by oblivion, biological maturing or ageing” (p. 3). A broader definition is offered by P. Jarvis (2009) who describes learning as:

the combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) – experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and is then integrated

into the individual person's biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person. (p. 25)

Important in this definition is the notion of biography which is consistent with recent conceptualisations of career development (e.g., Savickas, 2013a) and that of transformation; in essence, individuals construct their identities through learning across the lifespan. P. Jarvis (2008) reminds us that the person is at the heart of the learning process and that it occurs within a cultural context. This warrants consideration as lifelong learning is widely depicted as an agenda of governments through policies and legislation which in general relate to education systems within countries. Lifelong learning and lifelong education are different (Wain, 2011) and there has been a gradual shift away from the term lifelong education which was seen to place more emphasis on teaching and learning in formal education settings toward use of the term lifelong learning which places greater emphasis on individuals (Aspin & Chapman, 2012). In terms of policy, lifelong learning may be regarded as "individual learning throughout the lifespan and a form of recurrent education that can lead both to academic qualifications and non-formal learning that occurs on the job" (P. Jarvis, 2008, p. 28). Lifelong learning is essentially a pragmatic response to rapidly changing societies in order to minimise the risk of personal and disorientation by not being responsive to change (Wain, 2011). Aspin and Chapman (2007) describe lifelong learning as having a triadic nature; essentially it is for economic progress and development, personal development and fulfilment, and social inclusiveness and democratic understanding and activity.

The rising prominence of lifelong learning in policy contexts attests to its potential as a means to maintain flexible and adaptable workforces capable of keeping pace with the challenges of global competition and rapid technological and organisational change (Guridi, Amondarain, Corral, & Bengoetxea, 2003). Thus, there is an expectation that lifelong learning will be applied in relation to work. Longworth and Davies (1996) defined lifelong learning as "the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments" (p. 22). Similarly the Commission of the European Communities (2000) described lifelong learning as ongoing purposeful learning activity that enhances knowledge, skills and competence. Indeed, lifelong learning is seen as the key to "flexicurity", the security that comes through flexibility and a capacity to respond to labour market changes that is receiving much attention from policy makers (Sultana, 2013, p. 150). While lifelong learning has been advocated since the early 1970s, it is only comparatively recently that governments have seriously started to consider its implementation and lifelong career guidance is perceived as having a role to play in this (Sultana, 2012a; Watts & Sultana, 2004). However, better integration of lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies is needed to make access by all individuals to quality guidance services a reality (Sultana, 2012a).

The links between lifelong learning and career guidance have strengthened to the point where career guidance is seen as crucial to the success of lifelong learning policies (Watts, 2005). Lifelong learning is the only way for individuals to keep pace with a rapidly changing society and to maintain their employability. It is imperative that individuals are encouraged and know how to learn, and that they take responsibility for learning throughout their life-spans (Collin & Watts, 1996; Cornford, Athanasou, & Pithers, 1996). The claim that careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will require “learning a living” (Mirvis & Hall, 1996, p. 80) rather than earning a living is as relevant today as when it was made. Thus career guidance may assist individuals to make decisions about their learning needs and opportunities (Sultana, 2012a).

The notion of lifelong learning is far removed from the industrial view of the three ages of life of an individual, those of schooling and formal education, the working life, and retirement (Ellyard, 1993). Traditionally, learning in the second and third ages was not viewed as being as important or significant as the learning obtained in the first age. From a psychological perspective, Illeris (2011) considers learning in each of four life stages. In his first stage, childhood, Illeris describes learning as being uncensored and confident as children relate to and integrate experiences and information from the social and societal environments around them. Learning in the second stage, youth, is about searching and identity building. In the third stage, adulthood, Illeris describes learning as selective and goal oriented as individuals know what they want to learn. Learning in the fourth stage, mature adulthood, is described by Illeris as exclusive and conclusive where learning experiences are personally chosen because of their importance or interest. With the changing emphasis to lifelong learning, it becomes increasingly important that individuals leave school with the confidence and “a desire to be a lifelong learner, a love of learning, and be capable of learning because they have the skills to access knowledge, such as literacy and numeracy” (Ellyard, 1993, p. 5). Thus it is imperative that young people are adequately prepared for this future context in which they will be living and working. The need to continue learning does not diminish with age (Charland, 1996).

Lifelong learning is viewed as a learner-driven process (Ellyard, 1998; Wain, 2011). It is fundamental to career development and is considered as pivotal to successful life/career management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Commission of the European Communities, 2000). Given the location of lifelong learning within the holistic concept of life/career management, it should not be thought of only in terms of labour market demands and the employment of individuals (Aspin & Chapman, 2007; Guridi et al., 2003). Similar to Aspin and Chapman’s description of the triadic nature of lifelong learning (2007), Guridi et al. proposed that lifelong learning includes the objectives of “personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability/adaptability” (p. 10). Such a broad understanding of lifelong learning comfortably establishes it as a life/career management strategy that fits comfortably within the STF. While the relationship between lifelong learning, and career development is clear, realising the potential of career guidance services to address public policy goals related to lifelong learning, ‘flexicurity’ and



individuals' needs faces many challenges (Sultana, 2012a; 2013) including improved access and improved quality of labour market information, better trained practitioners, appropriately funded services and proactive policy to guide the provision of services (Sultana, 2012a) all of which remain long standing issues in the field of career development.

*Previous Acknowledgment of Lifelong Learning in the Career Literature*

While lifelong learning is presented as a relatively recent concept in relation to career guidance, learning has always been a theme of career development theory. However, the concepts of career development and lifelong learning are inseparable, as reflected in Collin and Watts' (1996) description of a career as the process of an "individual's development in learning and work throughout life" (p. 393). Indeed, reference to learning is evident in the theories of content, the theories of process and also the theories of content and process described in chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Since the days of Parsons (1909), learning has been an implicit part of career decision-making. In his approach, learning related to self and the world of work. Further, it was centred around a point in time career decision and was not presented as a lifelong process. However in the person-environment fit approaches, the concept of learning was extended through the notion of adjustment. Adjustment to attain a closer fit was on the basis of decisions being made about personal needs and work environment needs. Needs emerged as a result of personal learning. For example, Holland (1992) proposed the term successive approximations to account for the changes individuals make during their career development to enable them to be more satisfied in their work. These approximations result from greater self-awareness in terms of needs. Self-awareness can be construed as part of a personal learning process, and it is not unreasonable to propose that self learning underpins the person-environment fit approach.

The theories of process proposed stages during which tasks were completed generally on the basis of learning about self or the environment. For example, Super (1990, 1992) proposed that learning theory is the unifying feature of his segmental framework which applies to people of all ages. L. S. Gottfredson (1981, 1986, 2002, 2005) described how learning in relation to gender, social values, and self resulted in young people circumscribing and compromising their occupational options. In relation to the theories of content and process, individuals learn from their environment either directly or indirectly. These processes of learning are illustrated by the social learning theory of career decision making, social cognitive career theory and cognitive information processing theory and by the happenstance learning theory (discussed in chapter 4). Each of these theories focuses on an individuals' capacity to actively engage in learning at a micro- and macro-level.

Recognition of the importance of learning to individuals and to career theory is also evidenced in Law's (1996a) proposal of a career-learning theory and his revision of the DOTS model (Law & Watts, 1977) as a tool to review and refine the learning aims for career guidance (Law, 1999). In essence, this 1999 revision may be seen as a response to the changed environmental-societal context

previously described. Building on the DOTS model which focused on self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision learning and transition learning, Law has added the learning dimensions of sensing, sifting, focusing and understanding. New DOTS essentially describes the process and content of learning. A strength of Law's (1999, 2001) work is its theoretical and practical consistency through its central focus on learning.

### *What is Learned*

As evidenced in the previous discussion, career development theory draws attention to the possibilities of the content of lifelong learning, for example learning about interests, values, or family of origin influences, learning about the world of work, and learning about processes including decision-making, transition, communication and team work. Over two decades ago, Walz and Feller (1996) suggested that every worker needs a "core set of survival skills" including "resilience, the capacity for continuous learning and improvement, the ability to network and team, skill in using technology effectively, willingness to take calculated risks and learn from setbacks" (p. 431). Pena (1997) concurred, and added to this set of skills the need for individuals to manage the processes of change and transitions and understanding business dynamics (p. 35). Collin and Watts (1996) described such skills as the skills of career self-management, more recently termed career management skills (CMS; Sultana, 2012b). These skills may be defined as a

whole range of competences which provided structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise, and organise self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions. (Sultana, 2012b, p. 229)

The change in terminology to career management skills reflects differences between the skills and competencies needed by workers in the industrial era and those required by workers in the globalised world of work of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (McMahon, Patton, & Tatham, 2003). While technical and job-specific skills have sufficed in the past and indeed are still essential, it is increasingly being accepted that the worker of the future will need a more comprehensive set of competencies, "meta-competencies" such as learning skills, life management skills and communication skills that are not occupation specific and are transferable across all facets of life and work" (McMahon et al., p.3). Competency frameworks have been developed in a number of countries including the United States of America (National Career Development Guidelines K-Adult Handbook; National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, 1996), Canada (Blueprint for Life/Work Design; Hache, Redekopp, & P. S. Jarvis, 2000; National Life/Work Centre, n.d.), and Australia (Australian Blueprint for Career Development, MCEECDYA, 2010) that identify the career management skills (termed competencies) required by all individuals (Hooley, Watts, Sultana, & Neary, 2013). Such frameworks are lifespan focused and developmentally sequenced to guide

career practitioners to identify clients' career learning needs at various ages and stages of the lifespan and to develop age and stage appropriate career learning programs. For example, the Australian Blueprint for Career Development details 11 age appropriate competencies for each of four phases of life across the three areas of personal management, learning and work exploration, and career building (MCEECDYA, 2010). The career development competencies described in these frameworks differ from employability skills where the focus is employment and the individual's progression within and contribution to the strategic direction of an organisation (McMahon et al.). Rather, these frameworks assume a lifespan perspective and reflect the age/stage appropriateness of competencies across the lifespan. A particular strength of these frameworks is their capacity to inform policy and practice. It is clear that the lifelong learners of the 21<sup>st</sup> century need both the skills and knowledge to maintain their employability and also the skills and knowledge to build and manage their careers. Hooley et al. concluded that although there is no empirical base for these frameworks, they represent a useful way of connecting theory, policy and practice.

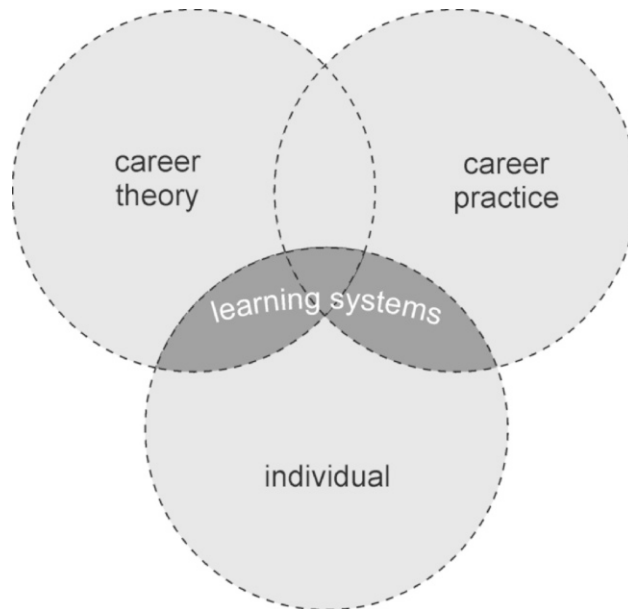
Learning about career self management is of particular importance in an era where career is conceptualised as a process, knowledge dates rapidly and change is commonplace. Indeed, there is evidence that career management skills may play an important role in economic growth (OECD, 2002). In a report on human capital, less than half the earnings variations of workers in OECD countries could be accounted for by qualifications and readily measurable skills. A significant part of the remainder was accounted for by individuals' capacity to build and manage their skills which included career planning, job-search and other career-management skills (OECD). Such findings attest to the potential value of career guidance services to the achievement of policy related to human capital and workforce development. Despite evidence such as this, there remains a need for a stronger evidence base (D. Hughes, 2011).

### *The Location of Learning*

Lifelong learning occurs intentionally (e.g., learning facilitated through a program) and unintentionally (e.g., learning from experience) and in formal and informal settings and is reflective of the recursiveness of the STF and the dynamic and interactive nature of career development. Learning is located within individuals, the individual system and is facilitated through interaction between the individual and influences from the social system and the environmental-societal system. However, concerns have been expressed about the provision of lifelong learning. Learning has traditionally been dependent on institutions such as schools, community colleges, universities, unions, organisations and government agencies (Jacobs, 2002) that have had control of the learning process. For example, Sultana (2012b) considered the integration of career management skills in education and training programs in the education and labour market sectors. He identifies a distinction between the 'preventive' programs offered within schools and higher education and the 'curative' approach adopted in the labour market sector. Career

learning emphasises “self-directed learning, active learning methods and constructivist approaches to meaning making” (Sultana, 2012b, p. 239) and thus may pose a challenge to schools where education is structured in more traditional ways. Gysbers (2008) concludes that social, economic and political traditions determine “why and how career guidance and counselling is conceptualised and practised” (p. 261) in various settings and countries. However, because of the importance of lifelong learning to the economic competitiveness and social well-being of countries, career guidance therefore is being elevated to a more central role (Sultana, 2012a; Watts, 2005) as evidenced in the European Council’s resolution regarding the provision of lifelong guidance.

Learning may be seen as a bridge between career theory and practice which comes together in the individual who is central to the learning process. It is the individual who is the central learning system. This is illustrated in [Figure 10.1](#).



*Figure 10.1 Individual career development and learning*

Individuals are viewed as open systems who receive input from their systems of influence. As self-organising systems, individuals incorporate the new input into existing life narratives and organise or reorganise their viewpoint, and in so doing construct their identities and their careers. Rather than viewing knowledge acquisition or learning in a cumulative way, knowledge is seen as building on and being filtered by that which we already know. Thus knowledge acquisition is viewed in a qualitative way, and individuals define their own reality (chapter 8 draws attention to the changing world views and the place of knowledge in these).

Learning is seen as a highly individualised process, the individuality of which needs to be respected. This view suggests that constructivist approaches are highly relevant to career development practices. For example it is the narratives or stories of the individual's life through which learning will be filtered (these are addressed in more detail in chapters 11 and 13).

### *The Language of Learning*

Lifelong learning is central to the career development of individuals, and individuals are central to the learning process. Indeed the constructivist notion of personal agency, the capacity to think and do for oneself (Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997), is fundamental to lifelong learning. However, the traditional terms of counsel, educate, train and supervise have connotations of 'doing to others' and those 'others', the lifelong learners, having little responsibility in the process. This is reflected in the shift from the term lifelong education to more widespread usage of the term lifelong learning (Aspin & Chapman, 2012). As indicated by these examples, "language helps define cognition, experience, emotions, and relationships by connecting an individual to another in predetermined ways" (Owen, 1991, p. 309). For example, terms such as teacher and student, and client and counsellor predetermine the relationship between those individuals as a hierarchical one with the teacher or counsellor in the dominant position in relation to the learning process.

If individuals are to be viewed as lifelong learners in charge of their own learning and career development, the use of these traditional terms needs to be de-emphasised, and a language used that places the emphasis on the agency of the learner. What is needed in career practice is a language that frees individuals to construe themselves as self-directed and responsible for their own learning, and a language that also frees professionals to act differently from the traditional roles of teacher and counsellor. For example, Peavy (2004) proposed the use of the terms helper and help-seeker instead of counsellor and client and suggested that counselling should be viewed as a working partnership to reflect the active role of both participants. A further example may be related to the term career education with its connotations of a teacher imposed process and career development learning with its connotation of the agency of the individual learner (e.g., Patton, 2005b). In the context of this book, the term career development learning is preferred.

This then raises the question of an appropriate language in this section of the book for practitioners who implement career guidance and counselling. For the purposes of this book, the term 'career development facilitator' has been selected, and will be used where appropriate. Indeed, the term career development facilitator was adopted in the United States of America to describe appropriately trained providers of career development services (Splete & Hoppin, 2000). We believe the term provides a sense of thematic unity between career practices, even though those practices may be conducted in different ways. The term facilitator relates primarily to a process and therefore does not define the relationship with learners in the same way as teacher and counsellor do. Thus learners may be positioned at

the centre of the learning process to take from it what is appropriate to their needs. Language issues will also be discussed elsewhere in part three.

### *Implications for Career Development Facilitators*

As reflected in this chapter, the changing environmental-societal context, the nature and needs of the client population, and the settings for career guidance and counselling have implications for the work of career development facilitators. On a broad level, career guidance and counselling practices are shaped by economic, political, and social systems (Gysbers, 2008; Herr, 1992; Sultana, 2012b). However, career development practices are still dominated by what has worked in the past, and their adequacy to address the career development needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens has been questioned (OECD, 2004; Savickas, 1996b, 2005). Career guidance has been challenged to transform its provision to include more diverse methods and sources of delivery including self-help approaches (Amundson, 2006; OECD, 2004; Watts, 2003), and to develop approaches that are more reflective of the nations and cultures of the clients they serve (e.g., Arulmani, 2010b; Leung & Yuen, 2012; Savickas, 2003; M. Watson, 2013; M. Watson & Stead, 2002). One of the most fundamental challenges posed for career development facilitators is the need to become more active in the policy arena and to establish closer links with policy makers. There is evidence that this process has already begun (OECD, 2004; Sultana, 2012b).

A further challenge is make learning a focus in career practice. This focus is evident in Krumboltz's (1996) claim that the goal of career counselling is to "facilitate the learning of skills, interests, beliefs, values, work habits, and personal qualities that enable each client to create a satisfying life within a constantly changing work environment" (p. 61) and to "generate learning experiences" for clients (p. 75). Similarly, Law (1999, n.d., 2001) emphasises the learning processes that may be incorporated into career education and guidance. More recently, learning has been incorporated as a core construct of the story telling approach to career counselling (McMahon, M. Watson, Chetty, & Hoelson, 2012a, b) that is based on the Systems Theory Framework. With learning as a focus, career counsellors may view their clients as lifelong learners, themselves as facilitators of learning, and their interaction as a learning system. Further, career learning processes that accommodate all learning styles are needed. Many career guidance practitioners, and to some extent career counsellors, may draw on psychoeducational models in their work. However, opportunities abound for creativity in the design of learning experiences that meet the needs of individual learners (McMahon, 2006a). These may include formal courses and training, or informal learning both in the workplace and through everyday activities. As Feller (1996) reminded us, "opportunities to learn are everywhere" (p. 150), a notion in keeping with a systems theory perspective. Closer links are being forged between education and industry and the promotion of organisations as sites of learning (Senge, 1990). The practicalities of rethinking our roles will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

The reviews of career guidance by the OECD, the World Bank and the European Commission highlighted five issues that warrant attention by policy makers and practitioners, specifically rationale, evidence, delivery, resources and leadership (Watts, 2005; Watts & Sultana, 2004) all of which remain relevant a decade after the reviews were conducted. Each will now be briefly described. In terms of a rationale for career guidance, there is general acceptance of its value in achieving policy goals related to lifelong learning, active labour market policies and sustained employability. However, the need to transform practice in order to provide a more diverse range of services that ensures access for all citizens presents a major challenge in many countries. The evidence that exists on the outcomes and benefits of career guidance is positive though there remains a great need for research that provides evidence of the long-term benefits of career guidance. In terms of delivery, Watts and Sultana presented twelve points for consideration, most of which will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. Consequently they will only be briefly outlined here. There was acceptance of the value of career education in schools, however concern was expressed that it could be marginalised in crowded curricula. In addition it was felt that career services in tertiary education settings and organisations and for adults of the “third-age” were inadequate. Concern was also expressed about the provision of career services to at-risk young people. While the importance of good quality information was affirmed, it was recognised that information alone is not sufficient. The redesign of physical facilities to accommodate self-help services was also discussed. In terms of resources, issues raised included the career structure and qualifications and training of career practitioners and the provision of career services through contracted providers and the private market. In terms of leadership, the role of governments and policy was discussed. In particular, the need for career guidance to be viewed as a coherent system within countries was identified as an issue.

The comprehensive understanding of career guidance policy and services provided by the three international reviews has clearly posed many challenges for policy makers and for career development facilitators. While the challenges are numerous, there is not time for complacency if career guidance is to maintain and strengthen its position. Viewed systemically, some of these implications may be addressed by individual career development facilitators, some by the career profession itself, and some by government and education institutions. Thus better career development learning outcomes for individuals may be achieved by actions brought about at any level of the systems which are relevant to their career development.

These environmental-societal changes related to globalisation discussed in this chapter are also relevant to the workplaces of career development facilitators (Paredes et al., 2008). As a result, career development facilitators find themselves managing their own workplace changes as well as providing support for others. Thus in a similar way to other individuals in the community, it is also necessary for career development facilitators to become lifelong learners through training and professional development. This issue will be discussed in chapter 11.



## CHAPTER 10

### *Learning Systems*

The lenses of systems theory and lifelong learning suggest a change in the way we think about traditional career development practices. For example, each of the activities of counselling, education, training, and supervision constitutes a learning process, and each occurs as a result of the interaction of at least two individuals. These are all open systems and may thus be viewed as learning systems. This learning interaction takes place within a number of interrelated relevant systems such as schools, colleges, organisations and communities. For example the counselling relationship is a recursive system operating within the broader system of the lives of the counsellor and client, the organisation and society. Therefore all of these practices will be discussed as learning systems in the following chapters.

From a systems theory perspective, the emphasis on the individual as a lifelong learner necessitates a change in thinking about career education, career counsellor training and supervision, and career counselling. As discussed earlier, these processes need to be language so that they reflect the individual's place at the centre of the process. Thus the titles of the following chapters have been carefully selected to reflect language relevant to the changing context discussed in this chapter. Training and supervision will be viewed as learning systems where theory and practice can be integrated. In addition, supervision will be conceptualised as a mechanism of lifelong learning for career counsellors. Career education will be discussed as a career development learning process existing within the broader school system. Career counselling will be conceptualised as a therapeutic system. Organisational career development systems will also be conceptualised within the Systems Theory Framework.

## CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter has been to set the scene for part three of this book. In particular it has discussed the changing environmental-societal context in which career development and career development practice occur. The chapter has emphasised learning and the centrality of lifelong learning to individuals and their career development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through the lens of lifelong learning and also that of systems theory, it has established the need to revision career practices and the traditional role of career practitioners.



## CHAPTER 11

### **TRAINING AND SUPERVISION: CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING SYSTEMS**

The previous chapter detailed the complex and rapid changes occurring throughout our society in the postmodern era of a global economy, and the resultant impact of these changes on the career development of all individuals. It is also clear from the discussion in chapter 10 that lifelong learning is not an option but a necessity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Learning occurs through all life stages and in all human settings and is the key process by which development occurs. Learning is central to all career development practices including training and supervision. However as discussed in chapter 10, these terms connote certain modes of interaction between individuals, and as we move toward an era of self-directed learners, they are no longer appropriate given the type of interaction they construe. Learner connotes a continuity throughout life, whereas terms such as trainee disempower individuals during certain periods of their lives. Therefore in this chapter the terms learner and career development facilitator will be used where appropriate.

This chapter addresses learning as it relates to the process of becoming and remaining skilled and current as a career development practitioner. Its focus therefore is on career practitioner training and supervision. First, the professional dilemma related to career practitioner training will be described and considered from the perspective of learning. Second, the training of career practitioners will be considered. Experiential learning will be proposed as a theory to provide a foundation for training and supervision that resonates with recent directions in career development towards greater use of approaches that are informed by constructivism and social constructionism. The establishment of a learning system for facilitating the preparation of career practitioners will be described, including an example of a learning process and discussion of the content and assessment of learning. It will also demonstrate that learning processes are a means of forging links between theory and practice, and between learning and facilitating. Finally, supervision will be discussed as a learning system that provides a mechanism for support and lifelong learning for career practitioners beyond their initial training.

#### A PROFESSIONAL DILEMMA

Career development services are more in demand than ever before and their value to individuals and to society has been recognised by policy makers (Gong, Deng, Yagi, Mimura, Hwang, & Lee, 2013; Sultana, 2012b, 2013; Watts & Sultana, 2004). Paradoxically, for over two decades concerns have been expressed about career counsellor training and students' lack of interest in career counselling as an

occupation (e.g., Amundson, 2006; Blustein, 1992; Hartung, 2005; Heppner, O'Brien, Hinkelman & Flores, 1996; Krumboltz, 1996; Lara, Kline, & Paulson, 2011; Reardon, 2009; Robitschek & DeBell, 2002; Savickas, 2003; Savickas et al. 2005). Moreover, international reviews of career guidance in 37 countries conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2004), the World Bank (Watts & Fretwell, 2004) and the European Commission (Sultana, 2004) revealed shortcomings in the training and qualifications of career practitioners and in career practices (Watts & Sultana, 2004). Specifically, the reviews found that the training and qualifications of career guidance practitioners in many countries was largely inadequate and that many practitioners do not have qualifications and training specific to career development. Thus advocating for the profession and developing quality training becomes a challenge because the roles and functions of career practitioners cannot be clearly communicated (Niles, Engels, & Lenz, 2009). Moreover, the training, skills and qualifications of career practitioners is underresearched (McCarthy, 2004; Patton, 2002) as reflected in consecutive annual reviews of practice and research in career counselling and development published in the journal *The Career Development Quarterly*, most recently in the 2012 review (Bikos et al., 2013).

In a special issue of *The Career Development Quarterly* on global perspectives on vocational guidance, one of the most significant issues raised was the shortage of training programs and professionally trained staff to deliver career services to individuals who need them (Hartung, 2005; Savickas, Van Esbroeck, & Herr, 2005). A further problem identified in the United States and in Australia is that career development has been minimised or marginalised in counsellor (Hartung, 2005; Patton, 2005a, Watts, 2005) and psychology (McIlveen, Hoare, McMahon, & Patton, 2010) training programs. Similarly, in Europe, Schiersmann et al. (2012) claim that the career guidance and counselling profession has “low visibility” (p. 12) as an academic discipline and that it is still an emerging discipline. In the UK context, D. Hughes (2013b) described a “gradual erosion of professional identity” (p. 61) and the need to strengthen the profession and protect it. By contrast, in the Asian countries of Taiwan, Japan and Korea, government support of career development in the context of workforce issues related to a shortage of decent work has offered hope to the field (Gong et al., 2013).

In response to concerns about career practitioner training in the United States, the National Career Development Association collaborated with the Association of Counselor Education and Supervision in a joint publication on Preparing Counsellors for Career Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (ACES/NCDA, 2000). These organisations prepared a joint position paper on counsellor training in which it was recommended that new and emerging theoretical innovations and convergences be integrated into counsellor training and that the principles of systems theory (e.g., Patton & McMahon, 2006a, b) be used to infuse and integrate career development into all aspects of counsellor education programs.

There is evidence of change (Niles & Karajic, 2008). For example, competency frameworks have been adopted internationally (International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 2003; Repetto, 2008) and nationally (e.g.,

Australia; Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners [Career Industry Council of Australia, 2011]; Canada; National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards, 2004; United States of America; National Career Development Association, 1997). In addition, in the United States of America, the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2001) has adopted standards for career counsellor speciality training. While there are differences between the various competency frameworks that largely reflect the contexts in which they were developed, there are also similarities which attest to the emergence of an international discipline. For example, in the United States of America, the National Career Development Association has identified competencies for both career counsellors and also for career practitioners, while in Canada and Australia general and specialised competencies have been identified. The competencies of the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance are listed here as indicative of those developed elsewhere.

- C1. Demonstrate appropriate ethical behaviour and professional conduct in the fulfillment of roles and responsibilities
- C2. Demonstrate advocacy and leadership in advancing clients' learning, career development and personal concerns
- C3. Demonstrate awareness and appreciation of clients' cultural differences to interact effectively with all populations
- C4. Integrate theory and research into practice in guidance, career development, counselling, and consultation
- C5. Skills to design, implement and evaluate guidance and counselling programs and interventions
- C6. Demonstrate awareness of his/her own capacity and limitations
- C7. Ability to communicate effectively with colleagues or clients, using the appropriate level of language
- C8. Knowledge of updated information on educational, training, employment trends, labour market, and social issues
- C9. Social and cross-cultural sensitiveness
- C10. Skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals
- C11. Demonstrate knowledge of lifelong career development process

The intention of such frameworks is multifaceted in that they identify the competencies required by career practitioners and also the possible content of training programs. For example, subsequent to the release of the IAEVG competencies, the IAEVG launched an Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioner credential (Hiebert, 2009). To date, however, as evidenced by the IAEVG website, few training providers have aligned their training programs with this credential. A further example of an international qualification is the Global Career Development Facilitator qualification which is based on 12 competencies and "resonates with a western culture and presents a United States model of concept and delivery of career services" (Splete, Weaver Paquette, & Atiyyah, 2011, p. 89). These authors claim that the competencies are transferable internationally but that adaptation is needed. In the contexts of Taiwan, Korea and

Japan, Gong et al. (2013) discussed the social and cultural uniqueness of societies and the challenge of developing career counselling models for Asian contexts because of the “phenomena and issues in Asia which cannot be explained by western models” (p. 10). Thus the adaptation of models and competencies needs to be considered with caution and cultural sensitivity.

In the Australian context, the competencies identified in the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners are used to guide the curricula of training programs. Programs which comply with the Professional Standards and the competencies may apply for endorsement through the Career Industry Council of Australia. More recently, in the European context, the Network for Innovation for Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE) has published the Handbook for the Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professionals (Schiersmann et al., 2012). This network is working towards the development of a framework for training programs in Europe across 28 countries.

The training of career practitioners is embedded in the broader issue of professional standards which are concerned with professionalising the field. N. Arthur (2008) identifies benefits that may be derived from professional standards, specifically: enhanced service quality, recognition of career development as a distinct and specialised field, advocacy for career development services, consistency in career development training programs, and accountability. She also identifies ongoing challenges for the field including different terminology in different settings (e.g., in this book we use career development and career guidance interchangeably), diverse practice settings and roles, the adoption and monitoring of standards. An important issue discussed by N. Arthur is the “cultural validity” (p. 313) of professional standards, an issue faced by Schiersmann (2012) and her colleagues in the European context who have tried to find common points of reference including terminology across many countries where career guidance has emerged in different social, cultural and political systems. In the Chinese context where career guidance and counselling is in an early stage of development, Sun and Yuen (2012) note that western models are not applicable and advocate that career guidance, counselling and assessment should consider the local context and indigenous factors. Thus, it is likely that cultural validity will become more challenging as the field internationalises beyond its traditional western bases as training and professional standards are contextualised for settings round the world (see N. Arthur, 2008; Gong et al., 2013; Sultana & Watts, 2008).

Thus a professional dilemma persists in relation to the training of career practitioners. While what practitioners need to learn is becoming clearer (i.e., by identifying essential practitioner competencies), how best to facilitate their learning is less clear. Indeed training may now be more challenging as it tries to balance the growing influence in practice and theory of constructivism and social constructionism and the field’s long standing positivist practice traditions. These two philosophical positions influence approaches to learning and teaching. For example, the positivist tradition emphasises content and the objective additive acquisition of knowledge. In addition, teachers rather than learners are located at

the centre of the learning process. This tradition emphasises the transmission of knowledge rather than meaning making and the transformation and creation of knowledge within the individual. By contrast, constructivism places learners at the centre of the learning process. It grounds learning in the broad range of past and present experiences of the individual, takes a holistic approach, and places value on subjective processes and meaning making. It places greater emphasis on the use of narratives, “self-directed learning, active learning methods and constructivist approaches to meaning making” (Sultana, 2012b, p. 239). Thus a lack of clarity remains about how to approach training with some authors (e.g., Reardon, 2009) claiming that narrative approaches have not been validated by research and have limited protocols for training practitioners while others (e.g., Osborn, 2008) suggest more creative approaches to training. Amundson (2006) considers such approaches, the broader focus and increased complexity of career guidance, a broader range of possible interventions and changes to delivery formats and emphasises the need for practitioner training, accreditation and standards. A complex dilemma about training persists. In the context of predicted greater need for career guidance services, it is timely to consider learning and the training of guidance practitioners (Savickas et al., 2005).

#### TRAINING

Since the last edition of this book, the training context has experienced much change as reflected so far in this chapter. In considering and proposing an approach to training that will serve the field well into the future, it is first necessary to consider the history of the field to date. For over two decades, there have been calls in career counselling for a move toward holistic approaches (Betz & Corning, 1993; Blustein, 1992; Hartung, 2013a; Heppner et al., 1996; Krumboltz, 1993; Richardson, 1993; Robitschek & DeBell, 2002; Savickas, 2013a) that is best reflected in what has been described as a “narrative turn” (Hartung, 2013a, p. 30) in theory and practice. Essentially these authors advocated the need to:

1. Broaden trainees’ understanding of career counselling away from its emphasis on occupational decision making and placement activities;
2. Locate client concerns within the broader system of influences to ensure that career counselling is holistic and the dichotomy between personal and career counselling is reduced;
3. Develop innovative and creative learning approaches; and
4. Validate the importance of the client counsellor relationship.

Reflected in these points is a need to move away from a dependence on didactic teaching toward processes based on creative, relational, and holistic approaches.

The notion of creativity is not new in career development. For example, in 1994, Heppner, O’Brien, Hinkelman and Humphrey (1994) suggested that creativity could enhance students’ interest in career development and promote quality client service through the use of experiential approaches such as guided imagery, metaphor, career genograms, timeline analysis, collage or other art mediums. Such approaches are appropriate for individual interventions and also training through

the use of structured small group work. DeBell (2002) found learners responded positively to her COMPLEAT (Comprehensive Plan for Life Exploration and Transition) model in career counsellor training. Similarly, Warnke et al. (1993) reported positive outcomes from the use of creative approaches in training. Texts providing suggestions about creative approaches for practitioners and also for trainers have been published (McMahon & Patton, 2003a; Osborn, 2008; Pope & Minor, 2000). However, McMahon (2006a) suggested that creativity in career counselling warrants deeper consideration.

Similarly, the notion of valuing client practitioner relationships in career counselling is not new. For example, Peavy (1992) proposed a “caring curriculum for educating career counselors” (p. 225) based on critical self-reflection. He suggested that a curriculum for educating counsellors should embody the same goals as career counselling (discussed in chapter 13). Thus, he encouraged those in training to reflect on their career stories and construct knowledge to explore possibilities. Peavy also suggested that constructed knowledge is “contextual, emotional, intersubjective, passionate, rational, evolving, relational, ethical, and values-based” (p. 225). Learning experiences which enable the creation of knowledge in this way build a greater understanding of the career counselling process and the experience of clients.

There is consistency in the field’s call to revise and strengthen training, competencies that can guide training curricula have been identified, and there is evidence that the dilemma of training is being addressed in some contexts. To date, however, little consideration has been given to a philosophical or theoretical view of learning that might underpin training. Indeed, learning theory is little mentioned in the field in relation to training. A notable exception, however, is the first and second editions of this text (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) which identified experiential learning theory as a potential response to the dilemma of career practitioner training. Experiential learning is particularly apposite in the context of lifelong careers and lifelong learning as individuals necessarily are learning from experience throughout their lives (Graff, 2012).

#### *Experiential Learning Theory – A Foundation for Training*

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT; D. A. Kolb, 1984) has much to offer as an underpinning philosophy for career practitioner training that is in line with recent trends toward constructivist and social constructionist theory and practice. Indeed, D. A. Kolb (1984) specifically stated that experiential learning can provide both lifelong learning and career development with a “conceptual rationale and guiding philosophy as well as practical educational tools” (p. 18). Moreover, the application of a learning theory, specifically, ELT, to career practitioner training offers a foundation and a consistency of approach that could strengthen training and in turn, practice. Such a foundation has to date been absent from discussions about career practitioner training. Sometimes misunderstood as a series of tools and techniques, ELT is best understood as a philosophy of learning (A. Y. Kolb & D. A. Kolb, 2005). ELT emphasises the central role of experience in learning

which distinguishes it from other models of learning (D. A. Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). Thus it actively involves learners in the learning process unlike didactic teaching methods. In so doing, ELT is particularly apt as a theory to guide career facilitator training as it may help educators to design better processes of learning and teaching and to improve learning. Further, it provides a deep and comprehensive understanding of learning (D. A. Kolb et al., 2001).

According to D. A. Kolb (1984) learning is “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (D. A. Kolb, 1984, p. 38), rather than a process of taking in and storing information in a cumulative way. Learners construct knowledge for themselves. Deep learning is an outcome of ELT that results from the combination of experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting in the learning process (A. Y. Kolb & D. A. Kolb, 2010). Indeed, A. Y. Kolb and D. A. Kolb (2009) believe that the recursive cycle through experience, reflection, thought and action helps learners to learn how to learn and to develop a learner self-identity. Learning is not about understanding the true nature things, but rather it is about the learner’s construction of meaning attributed to their experiences. In essence, constructing meaning is learning (Cottor, Asher, Levin, & Weiser, 2004). Learning involves language and language influences learning. Knowledge is constructed in relation to past experience, previous learning, and ongoing interaction in the world. The recall of previous experiences can facilitate learning as it provides the interpretive framework through which new information is fitted into the patterns of the past, a view explored by Bateson (see chapter 8). Learning occurs through the “active extension and grounding of ideas and experiences in the external world and through internal reflection about the attributes of these ideas and experiences” (D. A. Kolb, 1984, p. 52). Individuals actively participate in the creation of their own reality through their relationship with their environment and thus are proactive in their own construction of their knowledge. Learning is a holistic event involving thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving, and results in the creation of knowledge and meaning through the medium of language. Thus knowledge is both an evolutionary result and an interactive process.

D. A. Kolb (1984) outlined four critical elements of the learning process, all of which closely relate to the discussion on systems theory in chapter 8, specifically:

1. the emphasis on the process of adaptation and learning as opposed to content and outcomes;
2. knowledge is a transformation process, being continuously created and recreated, not an independent entity to be acquired or transmitted;
3. learning transforms experience in both its objective and subjective forms; and
4. to understand learning, we must understand the nature of knowledge, and vice versa. (p. 38)

This view of knowledge draws on Capra’s notion of interconnectedness (discussed in chapter 8), highlights weaknesses in content based didactic teaching, and emphasises the need for learning processes that can facilitate interconnectedness. It challenges traditional didactic teaching methods where the underlying assumption

is that “learning is brought about by instruction”. However “instruction does not cause learning. At best it can support and nurture it” (Cunningham, 1992, p. 42). Thus it is the construction process that must be nurtured, not the acquisition and processing of knowledge.

Similar elements are evident in constructivist learning where experiential exercises invite learners to “explore, examine, appraise, experience, define, and redefine themselves, their life experiences, and their directions in life both inside and outside” the learning session (Granvold, 1996, p. 351). Thus the emphasis in experiential learning is on development toward a lifelong goal and self-direction is the organising principle for education. These are consistent with trends in career development to recognise client agency and individuals as authors of their own lives (Hartung, 2013a; Peavy, 1992; Savickas, 2013a). This emphasis is important if an outcome of training is the development of lifelong learners who can drive their own careers.

Six propositions characterise experiential learning (D. A. Kolb, 1984) and closely relate to the world view that underpins systems theory. Each of these will be briefly explained.

1. Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes (D. A. Kolb, 1984, p. 26).

Using this approach, learning is not viewed as the memorising and storing of facts. Rather it is viewed as forming and reforming ideas through experience. Thus knowledge is constructed in this way by the individual and outcomes cannot be predicted.

2. Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience (D. A. Kolb, 1984, p. 27).

This is possibly one of the most significant concepts about experiential learning. In essence, it acknowledges that learners come into a situation with a prior experience on which new learning is grounded. In essence “learning is relearning” (A. Y. Kolb & D. A. Kolb, 2005, p. 194). Thus the learning process needs to tap into the experiences of the learner on which their beliefs and personal theories are founded, examine and test them, and then integrate new ideas into their belief system. D. A. Kolb (1984) claimed that “Ideas that evolve through integration tend to become highly stable parts of the person’s conception of the world” (p. 28).

3. The process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world (D. A. Kolb, 1984, p. 29).

This proposition recognises four modes of experiential learning. Specifically, they are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation which may be depicted as a learning cycle. However these



are polar opposites, and learners must choose which they will use in a given learning situation. Difference and conflicts stimulate learning (A. Y. Kolb & D. A. Kolb, 2005). These four modes form the basis of the four stage experiential learning cycle through which new knowledge, skills or attitudes are achieved. Effective learners need all four modes. In essence, learners must be able to: “involve themselves fully, openly and without bias in new experiences ... reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives ... create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories ... use these theories to make decisions and solve problems” (D. A. Kolb, 1984, p. 30). Any one or all of these processes may govern the learning process at a given time. This cycle opens the way for a richness of learning processes. In addition, learning processes which draw on these four modes of learning cater for the learning styles of all individuals in the learning system.

4. Learning is an holistic process of adaptation to the world (D. A. Kolb, 1984, p. 31).

D. A. Kolb (1984) described learning as “the major process of human adaptation” (p. 32) which involves the integrated functioning of the human system including thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving (A. Y. Kolb & D. A. Kolb, 2005). Basically, as an open system, individuals continually receive input which comes into contact with their interpretive frameworks, an outcome of which is learning and knowledge. This reflects Granvold’s (1996) claim that learning is brought about by “perturbations produced by the interactions with the world” (p. 347). Thus as the individual system receives input it begins a process of “evolutionary self-organization – a dynamic organization-reorganization activity” (Granvold, 1996, p. 347). Knowledge development, specifically self-knowledge, is assumed to follow this pattern.

5. Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment (D. A. Kolb, 1984, p. 34).

As evidenced in the discussion of proposition four, learning involves a “transactional relationship” between the individual and their environment which has dual meaning. First, it has subjective and personal meaning for the individual, for example an experience of joy. Second, it has objective and environmental meaning. These two meanings transact in an active self-directed process. Basically new experiences are assimilated into existing concepts, and existing concepts are accommodated in new experiences (A. Y. Kolb & D. A. Kolb, 2005).

6. Learning is the process of creating knowledge (D. A. Kolb, 1984, p. 36).

Knowledge is created through the interaction of subjective and objective experiences in the process called learning. Thus knowledge is a continuous process of creation and recreation.

## CREATING A LEARNING SYSTEM

A more recent addition to ELT is the notion of learning space (A. Y. Kolb & D. A. Kolb, 2005) which recognises the transactional nature of learning between individuals and their environments. Drawing on the work of Lewin's field theory, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of human development, and Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory, A. Y. Kolb and D. A. Kolb (2005) regard a life space as a "map of learning territories" (p. 200). In this regard, ELT's learning space resembles the STF which has been construed as a learning system (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). Learning systems may occur unintentionally, for example an individual interacting with another person or another influence from their system of influences, or they may be intentionally constructed in settings such as workplaces, classrooms or other learning sites such as a counselling clinic. Intentional career development learning systems (e.g., training programs) contain a learner or learners and career development facilitators all of whom have prior personal experience of career development, and some of whom may have experience in career development theory and career counselling. Each learner brings a unique perspective to the learning process, and indeed will leave with a unique perspective (Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy, & Perry, 1992). Thus, while the formation of the learning system and the provision of learning experiences may be intentional, the nature of the learning constructed by the unique perspective of the individual learner cannot be intentionally planned. Similar to Patton and McMahon's (1999, 2006a) suggestions for creating a learning system, A. Y. Kolb and D. A. Kolb (2005) have proposed principles for developing a learning space. These are: respect for learners and their experiences; begin learning with the learner's experience of the subject matter; creating and holding a hospitable space for learning; making space for conversational learning; making space for development of expertise; making a space for acting and reflecting; making spaces for thinking and feeling; making space for inside-out learning (i.e., learning that begins within the individual); and making space for learners to take charge of their own learning (pp. 207-209). Simply put, for a learner to effectively engage in learning, a learning space must provide opportunities for feeling, reflection, thinking and action (A. Y. Kolb & D. A. Kolb, 2010). Thus, as in ELT's learning space, the STF learning system values experience, reflection, subjectivity, dialogue, holism, contextual awareness and relationships which are reflected in the suggestions that follow.

*Developing a Learning Alliance*

Fundamental to developing a learning system is the development of a relationship – a learning alliance. Just as the quality of the relationship is critical in constructivist approaches to counselling (discussed in chapter 13), so too is it important in a constructivist approach to training. Thus as with any relationship, care must be taken in establishing a learning system to build a sense of trust and safety in the training group so that important sharing and learning can take place.

The use of group processes and experiential learning techniques enables learners to become both participants in, and contributors to, their own and each other's learning. This is an essential component of creating a constructivist learning environment because it enables a multiplicity of perspectives to be shared, reflection to occur and the construction of meaning (Bednar et al., 1992). Without a trusting, safe, respectful and caring environment such sharing may not occur.

#### *Clarifying the Process and Learning Objectives*

Given that this type of learning environment may be new to some people, it is important that the nature of the learning process is clarified when the learning system is first formed so that the members of the system understand how learning will be facilitated, their role and the role of the facilitator. Each learner in the group will have their own needs. The learning process is guided not by pre-set content related learning and performance objectives, but rather by the needs of the learners in relation to their experiences with the world. Therefore it is important that the learners be given an opportunity to articulate their needs. Thus facilitation becomes a process of balancing group and individual needs while facilitating a learning process. However, it is also useful to provide opportunities for groups to discuss and review their experiences of learning in the group, so that adjustments to the learning process can be made.

#### *The Life of the Learning System*

In traditional group learning situations, the evolution of the group process has been described as progressing through stages. For example, forming, norming, storming, performing and mourning, are much cited stages of group development (H. J. Watson, Vallee, & Mulford, 1980). While such linearity is not in keeping with a systems theory perspective, these stages draw attention to the fact that at different times groups have different needs which should be taken into account by the facilitator.

#### *The Learning Approach*

Creative approaches consistent with ELT will cater for the learning styles of all individuals. They also provide opportunities for personal reflection, sharing and self-learning. However, students are always advised to share only that personal information which they feel comfortable sharing. The issue of confidentiality needs to be discussed in order to create trusting and respectful learning systems.

#### *An Example of an Experiential Learning Process*

The following example describes an experiential learning process used by the authors to teach career counselling and in training to enable beginning career counsellors to reflect on their own career development. It illustrates the

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relationship which can exist between the individual learner, the facilitator, theory, and practice. It is important to remember that students are told in advance that the activities will require them to participate in personal reflection and sharing with others. They are advised to share only that which they feel comfortable sharing.

This example demonstrates the incorporation of D. A. Kolb's (1984) four modes of learning into the experiential learning activity. The learning activity is conducted in several parts, and illustrates how the elements of experiential learning can be interwoven through the learning activity.

### *Learning Activity: Using the Systems Theory Framework to Explore Career Development*

This process enables learners to reflect on the influences on their career development and to note the changes and consistencies over time.

#### *Part 1 – Grounding in Experience*

Learners are asked to reflect on their life at school leaving age. The facilitator guides a reflection process using a series of questions to encourage learners to reflect on themselves at that time, the subjects they studied, extra-curricular activities, interests, abilities, the type of person they were and any cultural considerations. They are then asked to think about the significant people in their lives at that time, including friends, family, teachers, acquaintances, and TV and movie role models. Following this they are asked to think about their socioeconomic circumstances, where they lived, and what work or further education opportunities were available. The guided reflection is completed in stages and after each stage the learners write relevant information on a blank copy of the Systems Theory Framework. The facilitator may use a whiteboard or powerpoint presentation of the Systems Theory Framework as presented in chapter 9 to guide the activity. Learners then complete another framework for their current stage of career development, and take time to compare the two and look for patterns, similarities and differences.

*Part 2 – Multiple Perspectives or Reflective Observation*

With a partner, learners examine their diagrams and compare and contrast them. Each learner uses their counselling microskills to help the other explain their diagrams and extract meaning from them. Thus in trying to be helpful to their partners, learners keep in mind the five core constructs of the STF's story telling approach to career counselling, reflection, connection, meaning making, learning and agency (see chapter 13).

*Part 3 – Creating Concepts; Integrating Observations into Logically Sound Theories*

Each pair joins with another pair and shares their observations. On the basis of their comparisons, learners develop a list of observations or generalisations about career development. In the whole group, learners present and discuss their generalisations about career development

*Part 4 – Multiple Perspectives*

The facilitator provides input on definitions of career development and the Systems Theory Framework.

*Part 5 – Reflective Observation*

Learners resume work in their small groups and discuss the application of the STF in their own lives.

*Part 6 – Making Decisions and Solving Problems*

In small groups, learners discuss the question "How could you apply this exercise to your practice as career counsellors?"

*Part 7 – Multiple Perspectives*

In the whole group, learners present the applications to the rest of the group.

This example illustrates the recursiveness of the learning system between theory, practice, individual learners, and the facilitator. Learning is centred on the learners and their experiences. The learning process elicits the experiences and interpretive framework of the individual learner, through which new information is received. Learning and knowledge unique to each individual is constructed. In

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addition, the example illustrates the role of the facilitator as being less directive, in keeping with ELT and also constructivist thinking.

Parts 6 and 7 of the learning process are critical as they facilitate connections between student learning in the classroom and their later work as career counsellors. For example, students may suggest that clients participate in the same reflective process with a counsellor. Thus learning in the classroom can be seen to have direct application to work as a career counsellor, students' participation in the process enables them to see the relevance of the process to their clients, and their role in facilitating the reflection of another in the classroom empowers them to be able to use the process with clients in their later work.

### THE CONTENT OF LEARNING

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the content of career development learning may now be guided in some contexts by international or national competencies. It is not our intention here to reiterate those competencies. Rather, we extrapolate broad guiding principles of career development learning which will now be briefly described.

#### *Self-learning*

Throughout life, learning experiences are integrated by individuals so that they 'shape' to some extent their philosophy of life or the meaning they attribute to experience. It is through this interpretive framework that new input is received, and output is channelled. Thus counsellors view their interactions with clients through their own interpretative frameworks, for example how they respond to input from clients and how they react toward clients. Therefore counsellors' hopes for their clients can be reflections of their own values, or in Corey's (1991) words, "the goals and therapeutic methods of the counselor are expressions of his or her philosophy of life" (p. 20). An essential part of career counsellor training, therefore, is to investigate their own individual experience and learning and uncover beliefs, values and attitudes which could affect the counselling process. The learning activity discussed previously is an example of a mechanism for this process.

#### *Diversity*

Learners live in a diverse multicultural society, and it is critical to incorporate a multicultural perspective into their practice (N. Arthur & Collins, 2010; Swanson, 1993). Multicultural diversity, as described by Swanson, is interpreted more broadly than the traditional focus on racial and ethnic minorities. In her view multiculturalism includes "gender, life-style, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, religion, and physical disability, as well as race and ethnicity" (p. 42). This definition draws attention to the diversity of clients, in particular those who have been traditionally neglected in career development

(discussed in chapter 6). In addition individuals may belong to several cultures. Such diversity necessitates the emphasis in counselling being on individuals and the meaning they ascribe to their lives. Thus, learning programs need to reflect commitment to preparing learners to work in culturally sensitive ways with a culturally diverse client group by integrating appropriate learning experiences throughout their programs. To this end some authors have proposed multicultural competencies that could inform training (e.g., Collins & N. Arthur, 2007). Experiential learning is an appropriate way to learn multicultural competence although there is little to guide career practitioners in its uses (LoFrisco & Osborn, 2012). Indeed, learners should be prepared to treat every career counselling interaction as a cultural encounter (N. Arthur & Collins, 2005, 2010; Stead, 2004).

### *Social Justice*

Social justice has been a core value of career development since its inception (McMahon et al., 2008a, b). Social justice is about more than being sensitive to diversity. Socially just practice suggests that career practitioners recognise when client needs may best be served through intervention in other elements of the client's system of influences. For example, career practitioners may need to advocate with management for accommodations in a workplace for a person with a disability. As reflected in this example, socially just interventions may also involve career practitioners assuming different roles, for example that of advocate (N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005). Such roles have not traditionally featured in career practitioner training and practitioners tend to intervene primarily at the level of the individual client (McMahon et al., 2008b). As practitioners face increasingly diverse client groups, there is a need to consider the implications of equipping career practitioners to enact socially just practice.

A sound base in career development theory is essential for those preparing to become career practitioners. As illustrated in [Figure 10.1](#), it is the individual learner in whom theory integration, and integration between theory and practice is forged. Career theory and philosophical understandings about career development, worldviews, often underpin curriculum development in counsellor training programs. However, learners should also be encouraged to critically reflect on theory (M. Watson, 2013) in order to be aware of its shortcomings. McCarthy (2004) also recommended that curricula should also be informed by public policy agendas and developed using a "bottom-up approach" (p. 175) based on work observation studies.

### *Counselling Theory and Practice*

One of the criticisms of career counselling is that it may neglect the client counsellor relationship and can oversimplify the career counselling process if it follows a matching model. Those preparing to be career counsellors need to be skilled counselling practitioners as well as to have a knowledge and understanding of counselling theory and practice. As not all career practitioners will work as

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career counsellors, advanced communication skills are essential for all career practitioners. Greater links need to be developed between these two disciplines of counselling and career development. Constructivist approaches to career counselling such as Amundson's (1998) active engagement, Peavy's (1997, 2004), SocioDynamic counselling, Savickas et al.'s (2009) life design and the STF's story telling approach (McMahon & M. Watson, 2013) are illustrative of how counselling theory has influenced career counselling. Further, as evidenced by the Systems Theory Framework and its story telling approach, constructivist approaches may accommodate the complementary use of traditional approaches with their greater emphasis on assessment (McMahon & M. Watson, 2012b).

### *Use of Technology*

The use of technology in career development has expanded rapidly since it was first applied in this field (Fowkes & Hawley McWhirter, 2007; Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013) and will be discussed more in chapter 13. Career practitioners need an understanding of technology in the context of people's lives and also in the context of their work (Gore, Leuwerke, & Krumboltz, 2002). Calls for expanded service delivery modes in career guidance including information communications technology (McCarthy, 2004; OECD, 2004) have highlighted the need for career practitioners to develop sound skills and knowledge in this area. From a constructivist point of view, information processing technologies facilitate learning that enables the learner to actively use knowledge and skills (Perkins, 1992), and decreases the emphasis on didactic patterns of interaction between learners and facilitators (Viljamaa, Patton, & McMahon, 2006). In addition, career counsellors need to develop an awareness of the ethical issues inherent in the use of technology in their practice. Moreover, career practitioners need to critically consider computer assisted career guidance systems as to date, there has been little empirical outcome research (Fowkes et al., 2007).

### *Career Assessment*

Career assessment still holds a significant place in career guidance and remains one of the distinguishing differences between career counselling and personal counselling. Therefore, learners may still need to be trained in test administration and related ethical considerations depending on the nature of the career guidance roles they are training for. However, a systems theory approach to learning encourages greater use of qualitative forms of assessment. For example the learning activity presented earlier in this chapter could be used as a form of qualitative assessment. This will be discussed further in chapter 13. In addition, the influence of constructivism suggests a different location for assessment in the career counselling process (McMahon & Patton, 2002a).



*Employment Market, Social and Economic Trends*

As evidenced in chapter 10, career practitioners are working in a rapidly changing world, where consumers of their services are demanding information on labour market trends that will help them chart their course into the future. While consumers need to be encouraged to seek such information for themselves, career practitioners also need to be familiar with this information and its sources. In addition they have an ethical responsibility for the storage and continued updating of such materials.

*Assessment*

Assessment of constructivist, experiential, or creative learning approaches calls for rethinking traditional ways of assessing and grading learners' work (Reid, 2003b). Using ELT and constructivist approaches, learning and knowledge is created in the individual and cannot be predetermined or predicted. As mentioned previously, learning objectives emerge in each individual learner in relation to their experience of the world (Bednar et al., 1992). Conducting assessment (e.g., using a test or exam) after a learning activity may not therefore accurately reflect the student learning that has taken place (Cunningham, 1992). Reid (2003b) suggested alternative approaches to assessment including professional discussions, peer review and peer and self-assessment, all of which necessitate involvement, ownership, reflection and learning. Two elements guide the assessment of learning, specifically: "To what degree does the learner's constructed knowledge of the field permit him/her to function effectively in the discipline/" and to what extent can the learner "defend his/her own judgements" (Bednar et al., 1992, p. 29). Techniques such as journaling and practical applications of learning to the work or life situations of the learner would be appropriate assessment tools. In addition, they would forge links between theory and practice. Learners could also be involved in establishing assessment criteria or developing their own ways of demonstrating their learning. Using the example from earlier in this chapter, learners may video how they used the Systems Theory Framework as a means of qualitative assessment of the career development of a client. Thus assessment is applied learning rather than the testing of accumulated facts. It also needs to be remembered that the "one size fits all" approach discussed in chapter 12 may not be appropriate to the assessment of learning. Different forms of assessment may be needed to cater for the needs of individual learners.

A further consideration is that the objectification of learning through scaled grading may also not be appropriate. Learning is mapped onto prior experience, and learning and knowledge are evidenced by the learner being at a different point from when they began. Given the ethical responsibilities of training career practitioners, competency based assessment could be appropriate – that is, a learner is either competent or not yet competent. Students could be involved in establishing the criteria and methods under which they will be assessed, either individually or en masse. Involvement in the assessment process would require

learners to be reflective practitioners who are able to gauge their own progress and learning needs, and as a result prepare themselves to be lifelong learners. While these ideas are not new, a constructivist approach to learning would place a higher priority on these methods of assessment than other forms.

#### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING VIEWED FROM A SYSTEMS THEORY PERSPECTIVE

Learning from a systems theory perspective, using Experiential Learning Theory as a foundational philosophy, provides a unity between theory and practice, teaching and learning, teaching methods and counselling practices, personal and career counselling, and individual and group counselling. This approach is empowering for students as their understanding of career development is enhanced through detailed personal and professional development based on their own experiences. They can see the relevance and place of their prior knowledge and skills as connections are made between theory, practice and experience. Throughout the training process, students act as both facilitator and learner, thus having an opportunity to apply their previously learned skills and constantly build on them. The following seven points emphasise the value of the learning approach to training career development facilitators discussed in this chapter.

1. The learning processes forge connections between theory and practice. Learners engage in activities, including self-reflection, that provide an experience onto which theory can be mapped. Thus learners construct meaning and knowledge by connecting career theory with their own experiences. In addition their learning is facilitated through a multiplicity of perspectives. Learners therefore are also more able to understand the process of counselling from the client perspective.
2. The learning activities used in the learning system, for example the Systems Theory Framework activity described earlier, can be used by the learners in their own work with clients. In addition, the ability to facilitate group processes addresses concerns about the provision of career services to an increasing number of people at a reasonable cost. Conducting career services using group processes provides a possible solution.
3. The skills of counselling are integral to the learning processes, and this in turn models their importance in the career counselling process. With the move towards constructivist approaches to career counselling, personal and career counselling are becoming more closely related. Training using a systems theory perspective and specific creative approaches demonstrates the recursive relationship between career and personal counselling.
4. Students build working alliances with each other during the learning activities by drawing on their communication and counselling skills. Developing learning alliances in training provides an example for learners' work with clients. Importantly, this addresses a criticism that career counselling has not emphasised the working alliance enough (Meara & Patton, 1994).

5. The breadth of issues addressed in the group processes and the multiplicity of perspectives that learners are exposed to reflect the complexity of and advances in career theory, specifically the place of work in people's lives (Blustein, 2006; Richardson, 1993, 1996, 2000). In addition, the complexity of influences that affect an individual's career development, and the concepts of lifelong career development in the context of a person's life are illustrated.
6. The emphasis in learning is placed on individual learners, a process which illustrates the inseparability of the 'career' and the 'personal' and the individual focus in the Systems Theory Framework. This also supports Richardson's (1993) belief that it is not tenable to "separate the study of career from the multiple and interacting strands and trajectories of development that make up the texture of lives over the life span" (p. 431).
7. The learning processes encourage a collaborative relationship rather than one in which the client is 'subordinate' Quality relationships are conducive to narrative approaches in career counselling, a topic that will be discussed more in chapter 13.

Career learning facilitators can be "part of both the problem and the solution" (Heppner et al., 1996, p. 121) of training career practitioners. Training that is informed by systems theory thinking and underpinned by ELT may offer a solution to the dilemmas of training discussed earlier in this chapter.

#### LIFELONG LEARNING IN SUPERVISORY SYSTEMS

The earlier part of this chapter focused on learning in relation to entry into the career guidance profession. As emphasised throughout part three of this book, every individual needs to facilitate their own career development through lifelong learning. In this regard career development facilitators are no different. However, Bimrose (2004) noted the irony "that a profession that concerns itself with the career progression and development of clients does not give more of a priority to the very activities that would secure the development and progression of its own practice" (p. 3). Supervision is one such activity. This section of the chapter focuses on supervision and its relationship with lifelong learning and its potential contribution to the ongoing development and progression of career practitioners and the enhancement of professional identity. Supervision has previously been considered as a possible lifelong learning mechanism for career counsellors (McMahon, 2003a, 2004a, 2005b, 2006b; McMahon & Patton, 2000, 2002b; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). In particular, the focus of this section is on clinical supervision. This section of the chapter first offers an overview of supervision in career counselling and then considers supervision in relation to lifelong learning, systems theory and experiential learning.

*Overview of Supervision in Career Counselling*

To date little attention has been focused on the supervision of career counsellors at either an empirical or conceptual level (Bronson, 2001; McMahon, 1997a, 2003a; McMahon & Patton, 2000, 2002b; Patton & McMahon, 2006a; Prieto & Betsworth, 1999; Reid, 2010; C. Watson, 1994). A notable exception is Reid and Westergaard's (2006) book on support and supervision. Despite supervision's widespread use in other helping professions and longstanding claims that it is essential for career practitioners (e.g., Nathan & Hill, 1992), supervision has remained peripheral in the field of career guidance. Supervision may be less well understood in career counselling than in other counselling specialisations and it is less widely practised (McMahon, 2003b; Reid, 2010). However, the benefits of supervision described by career counsellors such as deriving support, new ideas and strategies, feedback and professional growth are similar to those experienced by other counsellors (McMahon, 2003b; McMahon & Patton, 2000). In addition, career counsellors also perceive supervision as a worthwhile professional activity (McMahon; McMahon & Patton) that affords them a "restorative space" (Reid, 2007, p. 203).

A number of issues warrant consideration in relation to the lack of attention to supervision in the career guidance field. First, in the absence of specific career development qualifications in many countries, career practitioners have tended to come from diverse professional backgrounds such as human resource management, education, social work, and counselling, some of which have no tradition of clinical supervision. Therefore such practitioners may have limited or no understanding about supervision and what it may offer (McMahon, 2004a, 2006b). Limited knowledge of and participation in supervision is embedded in the broader issue of the need to improve the initial and continuing training of career guidance practitioners (Repetto, 2008). A second and related issue is that since the discussion began about the possibilities offered by supervision to continuing professional learning, the field has been faced with more fundamental challenges about its training and qualifications. Third, there is a limited evidence base to support claims about the benefits of supervision. Fourth, professional standards for career development practitioners are being adopted in some countries (e.g., Australia) and most require career practitioners to engage in continuing professional development which may be regarded as a form of lifelong learning. In light of these issues and the necessity for all practitioners to engage in lifelong learning, McMahon (2004a) concluded that supervision could be "well located as one of a range of professional activities available to career counsellors to reflect on their practice and complement their lifelong learning throughout their professional lives" (p. 65).

*Supervision and Lifelong Learning*

Supervision has long been regarded as a learning process that continues across counsellors' professional lifespan (e.g., Borders, 1994; Reid, 2010). Supervisors

have previously been described as “facilitators of learning” (Patton & McMahon, 2006a, p. 261) and as facilitators and designers of environments that support learning (Scaife, 2001). Moreover, supervision has been described as a learning environment (McMahon & Patton, 2000). Supervisees have been described as self-directed or “self-managed learners” (B. Proctor, 1994, p. 314) who must be committed to the process of exploring and learning (Scaife). Indeed, Borders (1994) suggested that supervisors can only be effective if they think of “counselors as learners and of themselves as educators who create appropriate learning environments” (p. 5). As a result the learning needs of the counsellor take precedence in the supervisory alliance. Thus, career practitioners who engage in supervision have responsibility for identifying their own learning needs, a reflection that lifelong learning must be learner-driven (Aspin & Chapman, 2007, 2012; Ellyard, 1998) and that the person is central to the learning process (P. Jarvis, 2008).

In the supervisory system, learners and facilitators together may “search for new perspectives, develop different professional responses, keep up to date with and contribute to research, and reflect on various aspects of practice continuously” (Bimrose & Wilden, 1994, p. 381). Through supervision learners enhance their self-awareness, develop their skills and techniques, and gain a deeper understanding of theory (Borders, 1989). In this way, supervision contributes to the ongoing development of personal and professional identity (Mortlock & Parkin, 2004) across the professional lifespan (Borders, 1989). These descriptions of supervision reflect the understanding of lifelong learning that was presented in chapter 10, in particular the definition offered by Longworth and Davies (1996):

the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments. (p. 22)

These authors also suggested that lifelong learning is best facilitated by specially trained professionals in an environment where a learning infrastructure caters for the individual needs of each learner in a personal and success oriented manner and where there is a non-threatening assessment and qualification system. Such suggestions resonate with Inskipp and B. Proctor’s (1994) description of supervision, specifically:

a working alliance between a supervisor and a counsellor (or counsellors) in which the counsellor can offer an account or recording of her work, reflect on it, receive feedback and where appropriate guidance. The object of the alliance is to enable the counsellor to gain in ethical competence, confidence and creativity so as to give her best possible service to clients. (p. 313)

Lifelong learning is a process whereby individuals construct and transform experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, and emotions (Holmes, 2002). Similarly, counsellors bring to supervision an account of their experience,

and through supervision transform it in such a way that it is meaningful and able to be transferred into their work and personal learning.

Lifelong learning is a concept familiar to career practitioners. It positions individuals to thrive and adapt in a world of rapid change, and there are increasing expectations that everyone will engage in lifelong learning. To conceptualise supervision as a form of lifelong learning locates it within a contemporary agenda. Indeed, it is highly desirable that a lifelong learning culture is fostered in the career guidance profession in order that it remains relevant and responsive to societal needs. Supervision may offer career development practitioners an opportunity for lifelong learning.

### *Supervision and Systems Theory*

Learning systems were discussed earlier in this chapter. Taking a systems theory perspective on supervision for the complexity of practice to be considered has been somewhat overlooked to date (Chang, 2013). A systems theory perspective encourages the context of service delivery, culture and complex patterns of interaction (e.g., between clients and career practitioners or between career practitioners and their employers) to be considered (Chang, 2013). With learning emphasised, supervision may be regarded as a learning system that facilitates reflection on practice (Burck & Daniel, 2010; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). The supervisory system can consist of two people or a group of people, all of whom become influences on each other in a recursive manner. The supervisory relationship is a system in its own right as well as a system connected to the therapeutic system (see chapter 13). Holloway (1992), one of the first authors to apply systems theory to supervision, noted that supervision “exists in the context of the profession’s requirements for training, the organization’s policies and needs, the supervisee’s learning requirements, the supervisor’s teaching objectives, and the consumer’s need for effective professional service” (pp. 180-181). Similarly, Hawkins and Shohet (2000) claimed that the four elements present in supervision are the supervisee, the supervisor, the work context and the supervisee’s client. Such descriptions illustrate the contextual nature of supervision and the recursive relationship between individual career practitioners, their social systems (e.g., clients, employers), and elements of the environmental-societal system (e.g., the employment market). For example an intervention from a supervisor with a career practitioner, may bring about a change in their work with their client, which in turn could result in new meaning for the client. Further, the relationship between the client and the supervisee, the influence of the work context on the supervisee, the influences of the supervisee’s system, and the influence of the supervisor on the supervisee are all examples of interconnectedness and recursiveness which may be explored in supervision.

In supervision, career development practitioners are positioned centrally as learners who bring their learning needs to the supervisory system. The supervision process is co-constructed according to the learner’s needs. The Systems Theory Framework provides for different types of intervention and different levels of

intervention (N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005). For example, in supervision, supervisors may assume roles such as teacher, counsellor, or consultant according to the needs of the learner. Support is fundamental to supervision as is challenge and achieving a balance between both is necessary. Supervision may facilitate both support and learning and this is one of its great strengths. This dual focus on support and supervision has received attention (e.g., Reid, 2010; Reid & Westergaard, 2006).

As with counselling and with training as discussed previously in this chapter, the quality of the relationship in the supervisory system is of paramount importance. Unfortunately, supervision is sometimes misunderstood (Reid, 2010) as “managerial oversight, control, mistrust and coercion of a worker by an employer” which is different from the reality of supervision being a “professional, consultative, supportive aid for counsellors” (Feltham & Dryden, 1994, p. x). In this regard, the language of supervision may be considered. The term supervision does not suggest a self directed lifelong learning process in which counsellors define their own learning needs. For example, the terms ‘supervisor’ and ‘supervisee’ connote a top-down process with supervisor connoting ‘doing to’ and ‘supervisee’ connoting ‘being done to’. Thus supervisees in the learning process may be regarded as learners and supervisors as facilitators of learning. Facilitators are also learning as a part of their ongoing involvement in the process; they are also part of the learning system. The ‘top-down doing to’ process is in stark contrast with notions of supervision as an “alliance” (Inskipp & B. Proctor, 1993) or as a “learning alliance” (Holloway, 1995, p. 6), terms which connote more an image of shared responsibility in a learning system. Thus the supervisory relationship should be reflective of the mattering climate (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989) that is so desirable in career counselling. Specifically relationships are constructed where learners feel valued, cared about and appreciated, that is, they really matter.

### *Supervision as Experiential Learning*

Supervision constructs a learning system that facilitates lifelong learning for career development practitioners in order that they continue to grow, thrive and remain adaptable (Ellyard, 1998). Features of the lifelong learning culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century include learner driven learning, just-in-time learning, customised learning, transformative learning, collaborative learning, contextual learning and learning to learn (Ellyard), all of which resonate with experiential learning. For example, Burnham (2010) discusses how approaching supervision from an experiential learning perspective may enhance the process. Specifically, he considered the application in supervision of D. A. Kolb’s (1984) notion of transforming experience into learning as well as D. A. Kolb’s continuum from concrete experience to abstract conceptualization. Thus the content and process of supervision is learner driven on the basis of learning needs derived from practice experiences. Supervision should be a collaborative process that is customised to suit the learning style and learning needs of career practitioners. Further, supervision is responsive to the learner’s current needs, and learning derived from

a supervision session may be applied in practice. Thus it seems that supervision is well positioned as an experiential learning process.

The content of learning in training systems discussed earlier in this chapter is reflective of the possible content of learning in supervisory systems. Patton and McMahon (2006a) summarised learning as being related to personal development, professional development, competency development and also support. In essence the content of learning is grounded in the experience of the learner through their work in the therapeutic system, a process consistent with D. A. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning, and the four elements of experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting in the learning process (A. Y. Kolb & D. A. Kolb, 2010). For example, supervision emanates from the experience of the practitioner; supervision provides a space for reflection on experience; supervision is a space for thinking about options and alternative perspectives; and supervision encourages practitioners to take action on the basis of their supervisory experience. Prior to and following supervision, it has been suggested that practitioners engage in reflective or self-monitoring practice (McMahon & Patton, 2002b) or in self-supervision (Lowe, 2002) in order to identify their learning needs and apply their learning. Peavy (1997) suggested that counsellors "observe their own processes of emotional, cognitive, embodied experiencing of self and other" in the counselling interaction (p. 162). McMahon and Patton (2002b) presented questions to guide reflection on the process of the career development facilitator's work as listed below.

- What do I feel about certain clients?
- Which clients are easy for me to deal with and which are difficult?
- Which counselling issues are easy for me to deal with?
- Which counselling issues are difficult for me to deal with?
- How comfortable am I dealing with emotions in career counselling?
- How comfortable am I in general dealing with the broader contextual issues related to career?
- Which contextual issues do I find it easy to deal with and which do I find it difficult to deal with?
- How am I feeling about my work as a career counsellor?
- What is rewarding about my work, and what is not rewarding?
- What am I looking for in work that career counselling gives me?
- What am I looking for in work that career counselling does not give me? (p. 245)

Self-monitoring career counsellors can assume the primary responsibility for their own learning, by identifying their learning needs which they then present in supervision. The following example illustrates how reflective self-monitoring practice and supervision may be conceptualised as a seamless experiential learning process.



*The experience of the career development practitioner* Career development practitioners engage in their daily work.

*Reflective practice* Career development practitioners may monitor themselves in the process of career counselling. For example, they could monitor their feelings and reactions within sessions in relation to particular issues or clients or they could monitor themselves over a period of time in terms of their own satisfaction, sense of challenge, or personal development. Alternatively, they could reflect on their practice using a process such as that proposed by McMahon and Patton (2002b).

*Supervision – multiple perspectives or reflective observation* The learner and the facilitator engage in a process of supervision whereby the story of the learner's experience is related, and new meaning and multiple perspectives are co-constructed.

*Multiple perspectives* The facilitator may provide input such as an overview of a particular theory, a counselling approach or a policy.

*Reflective observation* The learner may reflect on the possible applications of these perspectives and articulate his/her learning.

*Making decisions and solving problems* The learner considers and articulates the possible application of their learning to their work.

*Reflective practice* Following the supervision session, the learner reflects on his/her learning and prepares to re-engage in their work.

*The experience of the career development practitioner* Career development practitioners re-engage in their daily work and the recursive process between the supervisory learning system and the therapeutic system continues.

As described above, supervision is a way for career development facilitators to engage in lifelong learning. In a world of increasing complexity as depicted in chapter 10, there is a pressing need for career development practitioners to pay greater attention to activities that can develop and progress their practice (Bimrose, 2004; Reid, 2010). Over a decade ago, in the context of career development services in universities, Marginson (1997) predicted that the work environment would become "more competitive and resource poor" and that practitioners would need to "work harder and better" (p. 15). He claimed that "they will also have to retain and enhance professional identity and continue to develop professional skills

## CHAPTER 11

by sharing with each other, showing solidarity” (p. 15). This prediction is now true for career development practitioners in many settings throughout the world. In the context of lifelong learning, supervision may warrant further consideration. However, since McMahon (2003b) published an article titled “Supervision and career counselling: A little explored practice with an uncertain future”, very little further literature related to supervision and career counselling has been generated and it seems the future of supervision in career guidance remains uncertain.

## CONCLUSION

As discussed in chapter 10, the scene is set for career development work to take a greater role in the lives of individuals and in the environmental-societal system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, fundamental challenges related to the training and qualifications of career guidance workers persist in the field. In addition, while career development practitioners attend to the lifelong learning needs of their clients, they have not traditionally taken care of their own. This chapter has used the lenses of systems theory, lifelong learning and experiential learning through which to view training and supervision. It is hoped that this chapter may stimulate discussion about how these important issues may be addressed.

## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING IN SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

Providing career guidance to young people has been a cornerstone of career development since its inception. Schools, particularly secondary schools, have been one of the main sites in which career development learning has been provided for young people. To date however, career development learning has largely been provided in relation to school to work transition rather than as comprehensive developmental programs beginning in preschool and provided to all children and adolescents. Further, career development learning has not tended to have a close relationship with career theory or with career research. This chapter proposes the STF as a theoretical lens through which career development learning in schools may be viewed and experiential learning is proposed as an appropriate learning theory to inform the design of learning experiences. First, the chapter overviews the history of career guidance in schools and subsequently considers the relationship between career theory and career development in schools. The chapter then applies the STF to schools and concludes by offering a systemic process for reviewing career development learning in schools.

### **HISTORY OF CAREER GUIDANCE IN SCHOOLS**

Guidance had its genesis in schools in the late 1800s through the work of Jesse B. Davis (Savickas, 2008b). At this time the emphasis was on vocational guidance, and in particular, occupational selection and placement. Described by Gysbers (1990) as the “services model” (p. 3), the approach emphasised six major services: orientation, assessment, information, counselling, placement, and follow-up. Such an approach is firmly founded in the traditions of the positivist matching approaches to counselling (discussed in more detail in chapter 13). However, by the late 1920s, a need for guidance for personal adjustment had been realised, and the “process model” (Gysbers, 1990, p. 3), with its emphasis on counselling and the counsellor, began to emerge.

As this trend continued, vocational guidance gradually became subsumed under a broad guidance umbrella which also incorporated educational and personal-social guidance. During this period, guidance had increasingly been seen as an ancillary service in schools where the emphasis was on the position rather than the program of guidance it offered. During the 1960s and 1970s, the concept of developmental guidance programs began to emerge, stimulated partly by concerns about the efficacy of existing guidance services, accountability and evaluation, and partly by renewed interest in “vocational-career” guidance and developmental guidance.

Much effort has been devoted to developing guidance programs that facilitate career development learning in schools. Gysbers and Henderson (2006) traced the trend of guidance in America through the 1900s and noted that “in the 1970s the call came to reorient guidance and counselling from what had become an ancillary position organized around a set of services within pupil personnel services to a comprehensive developmental program” (p. 19). The first manual for a Comprehensive Guidance Program Model was completed by Gysbers and Moore in 1974. During this time, the role of career education in schools was also receiving particular attention around the world (Hoyt, 2005; Patton, 2005a). Perry and Wallace (2012) explain that career education was essentially a response to an education system that had taken two tracks, a vocational track and an academic track, by enhancing the occupational relevance of education.

The work of Gysbers and Moore (1974) is significant in several respects. First, they adopted the term career in its broadest sense to incorporate all the roles an individual may assume in various settings throughout their life span, and challenged the tendency to use the terms career and occupation synonymously. Second, they used the term development “to indicate that individuals are always becoming” (Gysbers, 1990, p. 9). Third, their emphasis on life career focused on the individual in relation to their life context. Fourth, their emphasis on development, in conjunction with life career, took a holistic view of individuals (for example, their emotional and physical needs), and their uniqueness in that respect. They defined life career development as “self-development over a person’s life span through the integration of the roles, settings and events in a person’s life” (Gysbers, 1990, p. 8). In addition, Gysbers and Moore’s (1974) Comprehensive Guidance Program Model recognised the need for guidance for all students and not just secondary school students at transition points, a focus under the service model. Implementation of comprehensive guidance programs has continued through the 1980s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997, 2006, 2012). The work of Gysbers and Moore (1974) typified what Herr (1992) described as a “major shift from career counseling and career guidance as a random one-on-one support process to career counseling or guidance as a program that is accountable for specific educational or career-related outcomes” (p. 270). Gysbers’ longstanding advocacy for guidance and counselling in schools is reflected in the 2012 publication of the fifth edition of his text ‘Developing and managing your school guidance and counseling program’ (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

It seems however, that the implementation of such programs is in itself a developmental process, and the reality remains that despite programs of materials and national guidelines and blueprint frameworks (Hooley et al., 2013) being available, comprehensive guidance programs remain on a continuum “from minimal at the one end to exemplary at the other” (Shears, 1996, p. 10), a view reiterated in the OECD (2004) review of career guidance, and a situation that has remained largely unchanged to the present time. This is reflected in the United States context where the provision of adequate career development learning in the context of challenging labor market conditions, is proving increasingly difficult (Schenck, Anctil, C. K. Smith, & Dahir, 2012). Similarly in the UK context, D.

Hughes (2013a, b) posits that the situation of career guidance has worsened in recent times as a result of neo-liberal influences which have seen de-professionalisation and moves to self-help models. She advocates the need for a clear vision of career guidance and its social and economic value and a need for greater leadership in the field.

Schools have the potential to be a “centralized hub” (Perry & Wallace, 2012, p. 33) for the delivery of career development learning in childhood and adolescence. However, the peripheral nature of career development learning in schools as reflected in the above discussion draws attention to difficulties under which career guidance and counselling practitioners have worked in trying to implement such programs. For over two decades, career practitioners in schools have faced issues such as timetable overcrowding resulting in limited time for career learning, limited budgets, limited support and ill-defined role definition (e.g., Watkins, 1994b). Moreover, career education and guidance programs are often viewed as extra-curricular activities taking time away from the curriculum that really matters and which is assessable. McMahon and Patton (1997b) claimed that in the Australian setting, despite affirmative rhetoric about career education, funding or implementation policies have not resulted, a view echoed by Patton (2005a) despite a resurgence in government support. This situation is reflected by the limited application of the blueprint frameworks in career guidance and counselling programs in countries such as Canada, the United States of America and Australia. While the value of such frameworks in providing a developmental structure and identifying competencies to inform learning goals and outcomes has been recognised (Hooley et al., 2013), their widespread application is not yet evident. Thus opportunities for career guidance to prepare young people to transition from schools as lifelong learners able to manage their careers are being lost.

Recognising the importance of the transition from school, Hynes and Hirsch (2012a) edited a special issue of the journal *New Directions for Youth Development* titled “Career programming: Linking youth to the world of work”. Of interest in this special issue is reference to a shift that has occurred in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to conceptualising career guidance or career development learning as workforce development and the need to prepare young people to be productive members of the workforce. This shift reflects greater awareness by policy makers of the potential of career guidance to contribute to labour market goals. Inherent in this shift however, is greater awareness of the “public good” (Watts & Sultana, 2004) of career guidance which has traditionally emphasised the “individual good” (Watts & Sultana, 2004). In this regard, Perry and Wallace (2012) reflect on the “historical tensions between the role of education and the needs of the workforce” (p. 33). Also of interest in this special issue was a change in terminology from career guidance or career development to career programming which Hynes and Hirsch (2012a) described as “any systematic effort to expose youth to the world of work and teach them the skills and knowledge they need to be successful” (p. 1) and which could be offered in different settings by a range of providers. Hynes and Hirsch (2012b) claimed that outcomes of effective career programming should include “long-term impacts on labor market outcomes such as occupational

attainment and wages”. This suggests the need for evaluation to be incorporated into career programs in order to build an evidence base which remains a long standing need in the field (e.g., D. Hughes, 2011).

A prevailing feature of career guidance in schools throughout its history has been its primary location in secondary schools and its emphasis on the transition from school and its neglect of career programs for primary school children. Childhood is a foundational period of lifespan career development in which children begin their career development learning (M. Watson & McMahon, 2005a, 2007) and the construction of their vocational identities. However there is a prevailing perception that childhood is distant from the working world (Porfeli & Lee, 2012). Porfeli and Lee suggest that early and late childhood may be an ideal time for career interventions because there is no decision making pressure. Patton and McMahon (2006a) distinguish between intentional and unintentional career development learning. Intentional career development learning occurs through career intervention such as career education. Unintentional learning occurs incidentally through life experience. In childhood, this may result in circumscription of occupational options from a young age (L. S. Gottfredson, 2005). Thus, not to attend to intentional career development learning in childhood may be a missed opportunity (Porfeli & Lee, 2012). M. Watson and McMahon (2007) recommended strengthening the foundations of career development through intentional career development learning in childhood. Similarly, Skorikov and Patton (2007b) recommended that the scope of early career interventions for young children should be expanded. Indeed, a number of texts (e.g., Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013) offer guidelines for developing, implementing and evaluating career learning programs that begin in the preschool years.

#### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEORY AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

Throughout its history, career development learning in schools has seldom been discussed in relation to career theory and rarely in relation to learning theory. A number of writers have commented on the dearth of theoretical attention to the role of career development in schools and in the school to work transition (Blustein, Juntunen & Worthington, 2000; Creed & Patton, 2003; L. S. Hansen, 1999; Patton, 2005a; Prideaux, Patton & Creed, 2002; Swanson & Fouad, 1999). Worthington and Juntunen (1997) asserted that focus in this area has been “driven by an amalgamation of macroeconomic necessity, social policy concerns, and educational reform” (p. 325). A special edition of *The Career Development Quarterly* (Lent & Worthington, 1999) focused on applying theories to the school to work transition, emphasising the importance of key principles of a number of theories discussed in part one of this book. For example, Krumboltz and Worthington (1999) focused on the importance of applying a learning perspective; Lent, Hackett and S. D. Brown (1999) emphasised the importance of the formation of self-efficacy and outcome beliefs, interest-goal linkages, action formation, performance skills, and identification of transition supports and barriers; the

developmental perspective (Savickas, 1999a) focused on increasing students' awareness of the choices to be made and the information and planning that influences these choices; and Swanson and Fouad emphasised the relationship between the individual and the context.

There is considerable evidence of applications of career theory to career development learning. For example, Gysbers and Henderson (2012) take a holistic life career development approach emanating from the work of Super. Turner and Lapan (2013) remind us of the contribution of the developmental theories of Ginzberg et al. (1951), Super (1990), and L. S. Gottfredson (2005) in conceptualising the stages, tasks and socialisation of childhood and adolescence career development. Turner and Lapan drew on a range of theory and research to conceptualise their Integrated Contextual Model (ICM) of Career Development which has been used to inform career interventions. These authors assert that both academic and career interventions are necessary to promote school success. Porfeli and Lee (2012) proposed a theoretically founded process model of vocational identity development based on the three tasks of exploring, committing to and reconsidering career alternatives. Systems theory has influenced the work of a number of authors. Prideaux, Patton and Creed (2002) proposed a Career Choice Cycle Course for grade 10 students based on Social Cognitive Career Theory and incorporating use of the Systems Theory Framework of career development. The work of Solberg et al. (2002) drew on concepts derived from systems theory and developmental contextualism in developing the school to work to life (STWL) program. This program emphasises the importance of intervening in systems to enable change, in acknowledging the multiple relevant contexts in individual development across the lifespan and the dynamic interaction between them. Niles, Trusty and N. Mitchell (2004) advocated that school counsellors must communicate effectively with subsystems such as administrators, students, parents, and teachers. A feature of all of these theoretical conceptualisations of career learning in schools is their holistic nature and their recognition of systems theory as a way to conceptualise the complexity of school systems.

The Systems Theory Framework presented in chapter 9 has been used to conceptualise career education (McMahon, 1997a) and career development learning in schools (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). The Systems Theory Framework emphasised the importance of school as an influence on the career development system of individuals and was one of the first approaches to attempt to embed school based career education within a theoretical framework which included the individual and the context. McMahon and Patton (1997a) noted that the influence of school on an individual's career development can be intentional or unintentional, and that the influence is generally random "as students are left to make their own links between school and career development" (p. 26). One important way in which the career development of all young people can be intentionally influenced by schools is through the formal provision of opportunities for career development learning. Criticisms prevail about the cultural validity of theoretical applications (Arulmani, 2011; D. Brown, 2000; Lent & Worthington, 2000; Leung & Yuen, 2012). In addition, a number of authors (L. S. Hansen, 1999;

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Patton, 2000b; Porfeli & Lee, 2012) have asserted that the school to work focus has undermined the importance of career education for all students. The proliferation of vocational education which pays little attention to career decision making has added to the confusion about the place of each in schools and in career development (Halpern, 2012; L. S. Hansen, 1999). In discussing the nexus between vocational education and career education Patton (2000b) concluded that

Career education needs to be viewed as essential for all students. Rather than be overshadowed, the current environment of vocational education and training in schools and in broader contexts increases the imperative for career education and related provisions (such as career counselling). The take up of new pathways depends heavily on sound career decision-making. This is a complex activity and individuals need access to appropriate information about jobs and careers, courses, training and the labour market which they can apply to their own skills, abilities, interests and circumstances. In addition to this information, they need opportunities within developmental curriculum programs, and where necessary through counselling, to facilitate the processing of information and related skills. (p. 38)

However, career education has sometimes been met with resistance, especially by parents, who mistake it for vocational education which they believe will result in their children going into work rather than college education when they leave school (Schenck et al., 2012).

Just as career development learning is open to criticism about its atheoretical approach in relation to career theory, it is also open to criticism that it is not founded in a theory of learning. As mentioned in chapter 11, Law's Learning theory is an exception because learning is fundamental to its conceptualization. Examples of programs in the field primarily reflect experiential learning processes. For example, activities such as work experience in secondary schools and Beale's (2000, 2003) activities for primary school children are examples of experiential learning. In this chapter, we propose Experiential Learning Theory (ELT; previously discussed in chapter 11) as a foundation for career development learning in schools. It is not our intention in this chapter to offer a detailed description of ELT and readers are referred to chapter 11. Experiential Learning Theory has much to offer in facilitating career development as evident in its application to training and supervision in chapter 11, and opens the way for activities underpinned by constructivist principles, including group processes, tracking career development using timelines, role plays and genograms. In addition it opens the possibilities for grounding career development learning in the real life contexts of the family, social, and environmental-societal systems. All of these strategies provide opportunities for learners to explore their career narratives and author their own life stories. Through this approach, individuals can uncover differences between their subjective and objective careers. In addition it has been strongly suggested that learners be encouraged to keep records of their achievements and of their action plans (Collin & Watts, 1996; Law, 1996c).



Chapter 11 discussed the relationship between experiential learning and the Systems Theory Framework of career development. In this chapter, we advocate that the STF provides an invaluable lens through which to contextualize career development learning in schools and Experiential Learning Theory as the theoretical approach to designing learning experiences. A systems theory approach is in keeping with the long held views that career development learning works best when integrated into the curriculum rather than as a marginalised extra (Gysbers, 1990; McCowan & McKenzie, 1994, 1997; Patton, 2000b, 2001).

#### APPLYING THE SYSTEMS THEORY FRAMEWORK TO SCHOOLS

Schools are an important contextual influence on the career development of individuals who we view as lifelong learners and direct consumers of the learning experiences provided. As such, schools exist as a subsystem of the system of interconnected influences of each individual student (as depicted in [Figure 9.2](#)). A number of authors have recognized that the provision of career guidance and counselling is dependent on the social, economic and political conditions in which it is located (e.g., Gong et al., 2013; Gysbers, 2008; Herr, 2008; Savickas, 2008b; Schiersmann et al., 2012; Sultana, 2012b). Perry and Wallace (2012) advocate that schooling should be restructured to align more closely with careers. Gysbers explains that “where career guidance and counselling is placed administratively, who provides the services involved, what activities are used, and what resources are provided however, depend on these social, economic and political traditions” (p. 261). The notion of career guidance being embedded in broader systems of influence is reflective of systemic thinking and affords a rationale for considering the STF’s application to schools.

The Systems Theory Framework can be applied to schools as it can to individuals. [Figure 12.1](#) illustrates that schools exist as systems in their own right, each containing a multitude of subsystems including administration, teachers, learners, year level cohorts, curriculum documents, school policies, and, if they exist at all, career development learning and career development facilitators. The school system exists as a subsystem of the broader social and environmental-societal systems and, as with the individual system presented in chapter 9, the school system must also be considered in the context of time. This section of the chapter will begin by considering the school as a subsystem and in the context of time. Subsequently, a description of the school as a system will follow that pays particular attention to career development facilitators, students and the implementation of career learning systems.

##### *The School as a Subsystem in the Context of Time*

Schools do not exist in isolation. Thus each school may be viewed as a subsystem of a much larger system. This is depicted in [Figure 12.1](#), which also illustrates change over time and the recursiveness between the influences of past, present and

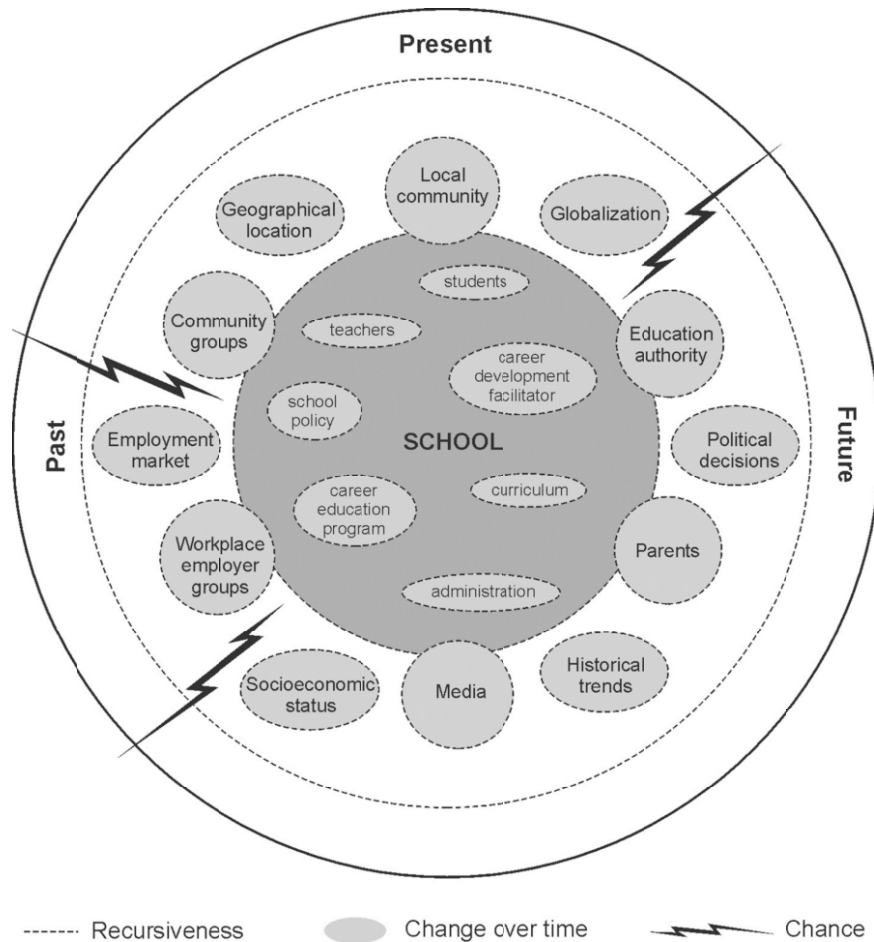


Figure 12.1 The school system

future time, its social system, the environmental-societal system and the school system. Historically, there has been recognition of schools' locations as subsystems. For example, Plas (1986) drew attention to the connection between the school and the larger system, and the exchanges that occur between them. McCowan and McKenzie (1994) noted that "school programs should be in synchronisation with the communities they serve. That is, they should take account of local situations, conditions and initiatives" (p. 32). For over a decade, writers have emphasised the need for career development professionals to become involved in policy issues, as it is through policy that funding provisions are determined (OECD, 2004; Roberts, 2013; Watts, 2005, 2013; Watts & Sultana, 2004). International reviews of career guidance suggested that policy makers and practitioners address rationale,

evidence, delivery, resources and leadership (see chapter 10). While these issues may be dealt with at global, national and state policy levels, they must also be dealt with at the local level of the school.

Schools are being encouraged to establish closer links with the social and environmental-societal systems in which they exist such as employer groups and local communities (Turner & Lapan, 2013) in order to enhance the career development services they can deliver to students. In addition, parents are being encouraged to participate more in education (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013; Turner & Lapan, 2013). Recursive interaction between the school system and its social and environmental-societal systems is being encouraged and fostered. Examples include work experience programs, links to apprenticeships, school/industry partnerships with flexible, individual determined pathways, and community based learning activities (see Turner & Lapan, 2005, 2013). Schools have a responsibility to be responsive to the communities that they serve. Similarly, there are also ways in which the community can respond to the needs of schools. There is a resource role for parents, employers and other members of the broad school community to play in the career development of young people (Turner & Lapan, 2005). For example, members of the social system may act as role models or interpreters for learners or parents. A strong recursive link between the school and the community it serves will help to strengthen the career development learning of its young people. The role of career development facilitators is pivotal if profitable exchanges are to occur.

Time spent in school is but one phase of a lifelong path of career development for students. However the importance of this phase cannot be understated. As discussed in chapter 10, there is a pressing need for individuals to become lifelong learners and to drive their own careers. If these constitute the foundations of satisfying futures for our young people, then schools have a major part to play in laying the foundations. For example, in the developing country context of South Africa, the life orientation curriculum that incorporates career education, is viewed as “an excellent basis for equipping learners to respond positively to social demands, assume responsibilities, and optimize their life chances” (Prinsloo, 2007, p. 155) by equipping learners through outcomes based education that is a “learner driven and activity based approach to education” to “solve problems, to make informed decisions and choices and to take appropriate actions to enable them to live meaningfully and successfully in a rapidly changing society” (South African Department of Education, 2003, p. 9). Unfortunately, the promise of life orientation, as with career education in many other countries (e.g., the United States [see Schenck et al., 2012] and the UK [see D. Hughes, 2013a, b]), has not been realised despite their holistic and future foci. In the US, Schenck et al. described the vacillating fortunes of career guidance in schools in the context of successive education and curriculum reforms, most recently the No Child Left Behind Act which emphasises academic achievement and has drawn resources away from career guidance. Such reform illustrates the place of schools as subsystems of broader social and environmental-societal systems and the way in

which changes in other systems impact school systems and in turn career education provision.

The needs of the future must drive practice in schools. For almost two decades, the structure, organisation, curriculum and pedagogy of the school system has been criticised as being outdated and its capacity to adequately prepare young people for the future has been questioned (e.g., Crow, 1996; Halpern, 2012). Halpern discusses tensions about the vocational role of schools but argues that schools should play a “central role in helping young people with vocationally oriented tasks and try to be at least somewhat responsive to the labor market and trends in work” (p. 89). Indeed, Halpern argues that career and technical education provides young people with a purpose for learning and that the traditional approach of attending to abstract learning first and application later has not worked. He argues that career and technical learning assists young people to find meaning in what they are learning. The literature is replete with lists of enterprise skills, employability skills, generic capabilities, and a range of attributes and skills which workers of the present and future will need. These include what a number of writers have called core survival skills such as resilience, the capacity for continuous learning and improvement, the ability to network and team, skill in using technology effectively, and willingness to take calculated risks and learn from setbacks (see chapter 1). For over a decade the need to learn “how to adapt to changing conditions in the workplace” (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999, p. 314) p. 313) has been recognised as one of the essential skills for success. More recently, career adaptability has been given considerable attention as an essential skill through the influence of career construction theory (Savickas, 2013). How well schools are engaged in preparing young people with such skills has been criticised by a number of authors (e.g., Halpern, 2012; Patton, 2005a). Young people especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who do not develop such skills may move into the future disenfranchised (Halpern, 2012).

### *Accountability*

The closer links between career development learning, schools, and the wider social and environmental-societal systems have drawn attention to the need for accountable practice and demonstrated outcomes. Accountability exists within the school system as well as at the interface between the school system and stakeholders in the social and environmental-societal systems and also within the school system itself. Accountability is not a new issue in the field. For example, in 1995 Beavers emphasised that guidance professionals cannot avoid the demand for accountability “by pretending that guidance and counselling goals and methods are of such an esoteric nature that they are not amenable to evaluation” (p. 8). Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey (2013) regard the belief that guidance cannot be objectively evaluated as a “roadblock to evaluation” (p. 309), along with concerns that evaluation could reveal negative results, and unsystematic guidance that has not demonstrated objectives. In addition, career development facilitators may not have the financial or time resources to conduct evaluation or the expertise to do so

(Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013). Beavers claimed that career development facilitators must be able to demonstrate the positive student outcomes of their programs in order to receive ongoing funding. While Beavers' claims came from within the career guidance field, calls for evaluation and an evidence base have increasingly emanated from elements of the social and environmental-societal systems. For example, policy makers have repeatedly emphasized the need for the field to develop an evidence base since the "public good" (Watts & Sultana, 2004) of career guidance through its potential contribution to labour market, social and economic policy goals has been more widely recognised. Thus greater accountability is being expected of career development practitioners and career development service providers.

Evaluation is an essential element of accountability. Further, as the conditions of the social and environmental system change, so too do the career development needs of clients. Evaluation assists practitioners and services to gauge the responsiveness, effectiveness and relevance of their responses to changing needs. Indeed, "without efficacy evidence, it is difficult for funders to support the delivery of career development services" (Baudouin et al., 2007, p. 147). The move toward comprehensive guidance programs was significant as it provided a mechanism for addressing these concerns. This is reflected in the elements of Gysbers' (1990; Gysbers & Henderson, 1997, 2006, 2012) model which includes definition and philosophy, rationale, and assumptions. Integral to his assumptions is the reminder that "planning, designing, implementing, and evaluation must continue even long after the program is put in place" (Gysbers, 1990, p. 13). McCowan and McKenzie (1994, 1997) further suggested that outcomes be demonstrated in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that learners acquire. In addition, they suggested that these outcomes "address the four social contexts of school, family, labour market, and society/economy" (1994, p. 42). This prophetic statement remains highly relevant in the context of blueprint frameworks that identify competencies by which outcomes could be evaluated (Hooley et al., 2013). Canadian research however, found that while career practitioners recognize the value of evaluation, they do not necessarily evaluate their programs (Baudouin et al., 2007). Further, how to evaluate in a way that demonstrates the efficacy of the service remains a problem. Evaluation is not straight forward and its complexity is being realised (e.g., Bimrose, Barnes, D. Hughes, & Orton, 2004). In the Canadian context, a research working group has been established to develop an evaluation framework that could assist practitioners (Baudouin et al., 2007). Using an input, processes, and output model, this evaluation model focuses on the resources available (input), the activities or process that link to outcomes or deliverables (process), and indicators of client change (output).

It is essential that career development learning be subject to ongoing evaluation, monitoring and review (Gysbers, 1990; Gysbers & Henderson, 1997, 2006, 2012; McCowan & McKenzie, 1994, 1997; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013). The provision of evaluation information to stakeholders in the social and environmental-societal system will ensure that career development learning is better understood, and that its outcomes are meeting the needs of the individual,

## CHAPTER 12

school, social, and environmental-societal systems. As a result career development learning is more likely to maintain a place in the school curriculum.

### THE SCHOOL AS A SYSTEM

The previous discussion examined the recursive links between the school system and the social and environmental-societal systems. However the elements of the school system also need consideration. This section will focus on the role of the career development facilitator, the learners, and career development learning.

#### *The Career Development Facilitator*

Given the ongoing dilemma that career development learning is often considered as peripheral to, rather than an integral part of the school curriculum, career development facilitators are faced with many challenges. Career guidance continually has to justify its place in the curriculum (e.g., Schenck et al., 2012). Thus, consistent with the Systems Theory Framework, the role of career development facilitators in schools is multifaceted and multileveled and involves tasks such as public relations, teaching, curriculum development, acquisition and maintenance of career resources, staff development and professional development, all of which demonstrate recursive links with other elements of the school system and also with the social and environmental-societal systems. For example, Chen (2005) discussed collaboration between guidance counsellors and teachers in the classroom context and its capacity to enhance career guidance and career education in schools.

In this regard, career development facilitators may be viewed as “intermediaries” (Cornford et al., 1996, p. 43) between members of the system including clients, employers, educational bodies and government agencies and as “proactive catalysts” who ensure that students are prepared to meet the challenges of the world of work through career education programs (Schenck et al., 2012, p. 228). Thus, career development facilitators have a resource role to play in promoting current thinking about work and learning and providing current information to parent and employer bodies, as well as to teachers and others in the school system. This illustrates the need for career development facilitators to take a broader view of their role than simply one of being school based.

However, career development facilitators frequently find themselves being the only person on a school staff with a background and interest in career development. Therefore the onus is on them not to have a narrow view of career development or of guidance programs, but to be able to set them into the broad system of influences. This necessitates career development facilitators having a sound background in teaching and learning, career development theory, career education, curriculum development, and international, national and state trends in education policy and the employment market (Patton, 2005a). More recently, the skills and knowledge required by career development facilitators has been conveyed as sets of practitioner competencies such as those developed by the

International Association for Vocational and Educational Guidance (2003) and the Career Industry Council of Australia (2011).

Conceptualising the career development facilitator role from a systems theory perspective offers a way of understanding the complexity of the task in a multileveled and multilayered school system. Moreover, it enables career development facilitators to identify and respond to the particular needs of diverse groups in the school system such as the groups discussed in chapter 6. Awareness of the social context of the school community, and hence the composition of the student body, may necessitate the use of varied approaches (see McMahon & Patton, 2003a; Turner & Lapan, 2005, 2013). A systems theory perspective on the role of career development facilitator also opens the possibility to intervene in different elements of the system (e.g., with parents or with employers). In this regard, practitioners are more likely to intervene with individuals rather than systemically (N. Arthur et al., 2013; McMahon et al., 2008b). Further, given the peripheral and tenuous place of career education and career guidance in school programs, evaluation and the demonstration of outcomes to relevant stakeholders becomes an essential skill for career development facilitators and a way of demonstrating the value of the services provided.

Career development facilitators face multiple and competing demands in their daily work. The field of career guidance has become more professionalised through the promotion of career development practitioner competencies, continuing professional development requirements and codes of ethics. Career development facilitators who remain connected to their field by maintaining contact with other practitioners, membership of professional associations and participating in professional development, may be better placed to cater for the multiple demands on their time and the needs of a diverse client group.

#### *The Students – Learners and Consumers*

A systems theory view of education draws attention to the need to recognise individuals as having unique learning and career development needs. Career development occurs in sociopolitical cultures that reflect the complex intersectionality of individual, social and environmental-societal influences such as race, culture, family, socioeconomic status and geographical location (e.g., Blustein, Chaves, Diemer, Gallagher, Marshall, Sirin et al., 2002; Diemer, 2007; Diemer & Blustein, 2006, 2007). The monocultural orientation of the theories that inform career counselling and career education and their potential inappropriateness for some students, especially those from collectivist cultures and for those with special needs has been discussed (e.g., Arulmani, 2011; Diemer, 2007; C. Hughes & T. Thomas, 2005; Leung & Yuen, 2012; M. Watson, 2013). A “one-size-fits-all” approach fails to address the needs of many young people in our school system such as students with disabilities (e.g., OECD, 2010; Soresi et al., 2008), students from rural backgrounds (e.g., Collett, 1997), and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds (e.g., Blustein, et al., 2002; Krause, Hartley, James, & McInnis, 2005; Marks, 2009; Rothman & Hillman, 2008; Thomson, 2005).

Awareness of the school's diverse client population and their needs is essential in order to provide socially just services. In this regard, career development practitioners may need to advocate for students with particular needs (Gysbers, 1996) and to "develop systematic programs for students, teachers, parents, community leaders and others, and to act as advocates in the arena of public policy" (Patton, 1997b, p. 91). Her comment illustrates the recursiveness of the system, and the potential of career development facilitators to act on the social or environmental-societal system to effect change for the individual system. For example, working with parents can empower them to advocate with school or government authorities, which in turn may result in better learning outcomes for those individuals with special needs.

The recursiveness (intersectionality) between factors such as poverty, race, parental support, and school experience on dropout rates, marginalisation in the labour market and welfare dependency has been examined in a number of studies (e.g., Kenny, Walsh-Blair, Blustein, Bempechat, & Seltzer, 2010; Wirth-Bond, Coyne, & Adams, 1991). Kenny et al. (2010) found that school students may benefit from career interventions such as work based learning that enable them to "establish goals, develop clear plans or pathways for attaining those goals, and gain confidence and competence for achieving those goals" (p. 211). Diemer (2007) concluded that maximising school and parental support of disadvantaged urban youth is critical to their career development. W. A. Borgen and Hiebert (2006) recommend that young people themselves are involved in the design of the programs and services available to them. These authors suggest that young people are best positioned to know their needs and that career guidance services should be responsive to their needs rather than based on practitioner speculation about what they need. While schools may not be able to address the issues presented by the broader system, they are able to address the learning needs of these students within the school system. Thus schools need to intervene with individual students in appropriate ways to provide them with a chance of successfully negotiating a complex world of work. In this regard, the promise of individualised learning plans to assist students to develop career readiness and college plans has been discussed (Solberg, Phelps, Haakenson, Durham, & Timmons, 2012). Solberg et al. suggest that individualised learning plans "increase the relevance of coursework, positive relationships between teachers and students and between parents and the school" (p. 510). From the perspective of the Systems Theory Framework, individualised learning plans place the individual student as the core of their own learning.

#### IMPLEMENTING CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

The career development field abounds with guidelines for designing, developing and implementing career development learning programs in schools (e.g., D. Brown, 2012; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013; Sampson, 2008). In describing best practice in the design of career development programs, Patton and McMahon (2001) drew attention to a number of principles that are reflective of a systems theory perspective specifically:



1. Principles related to the client group:
  - a) The needs of the client group should be the focus
  - b) Career programs should actively involve clients
2. Principles related to program development and maintenance:
  - a) Career programs should be multifaceted
  - b) Career programs require regular monitoring and review.
3. Principles related to the relationship between the program and the broader community:
  - a) Career programs should be integral to professional development programs in organisations and widely accessible to the community.
  - b) Career programs should actively involve relevant stakeholders and appropriate representatives of the wider community.
4. Principles related to professional issues:
  - a) Personnel involved in coordinating and delivering programs should be appropriately trained
  - b) Career programs should use relevant, accessible and user-friendly information
  - c) Management should actively endorse and support the program.
5. Patton and McMahon also described eight steps of program implementation, specifically:
  - a) Prepare a clear statement of rationale
  - b) Identify program goals
  - c) Determine the target group and the potential size of that group
  - d) Determine the structure of the program
  - e) Consider implementation issues such as the length, timing and location of the program
  - f) Affirm teaching and learning approaches
  - g) Finalise resources such as print materials, web resources, and personnel
  - h) Plan to monitor and evaluate the program.

These comprehensive principles and implementation steps highlight the need for a systematic and systemic approach to the development of career programs. More recently, Gysbers and Henderson (2012), in the fifth edition of their book, identified similar guidelines including planning, designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing career guidance programs. While there is some agreement on the guidelines informing the design of career development learning in schools, there is much less agreement on how it should be provided and persistent and unresolved issues remain concerning how career guidance and counselling is “conceptualized, organized, labeled and practiced” (Gysbers, 2008, p. 258). For example, career development learning is largely perceived as peripheral to the mainstream curriculum in schools. Questions remain about whether career development learning should be a stand alone program or integrated into the curriculum. Related to this are concerns about how much career development learning should be provided. While there is agreement in the career field that developmentally appropriate career development should be offered to all young people from preschool onwards, the reality in schools, is that it is primarily

attended to in secondary schools and even then, focuses predominantly on transition from school. A further unresolved and critical issue that has been discussed in chapters 10 and 11 is that of the need for ongoing research to develop an evidence base that attests to the value and contribution of career guidance and counselling. While evaluation of programs is evident in most guidelines for developing career development learning programs (e.g., Patton & McMahon, 2001), many practitioners are ill-prepared to undertake this important work.

As discussed in chapters 10 and 11, the language used to describe career development practices needs to encompass terminology which places the individual learner at the centre of the process. The term used to describe those responsible for career guidance in schools varies and includes career teacher, career coordinator, career counsellor, and career adviser. However the change of focus from teaching to learning, and from education to the learner, necessitates more appropriate terms being used to describe the role. Gysbers (1990) suggested that teachers could be regarded as “advisors, learner managers, or development specialists” (p. 6). These examples serve to illustrate how language can be used to construe meaning. However from the perspectives of lifelong learning, experiential learning, and systems theory which focus on the individual, we believe the most appropriate term to be used is career development facilitator.

As discussed in chapter 10, a number of countries have developed competency frameworks that can guide the design and development of career development learning programs (e.g., the United States of America, Australia, Canada). In Australia 11 competencies are structured around three main areas (Personal management, Learning and Work Exploration, and Career Building). The frameworks take a lifespan focus and identify age appropriate competencies at four stages across the lifespan beginning in childhood (Hooley et al., 2013). Thus they are well positioned to provide a foundation for career development learning in schools.

### *Learning Content and Processes*

The competencies outlined in the frameworks largely identify potential learning content. Indeed, the competencies are organised under a similar structure that has underpinned the field since the days of Parsons, specifically three major elements, each of which have been modified from their early formulations (Patton, 2001).

1. Self-awareness/preparation: Helps clarify personal values, strengths, potential and aspirations. The skills acquired in this phase are used throughout the lifespan.
2. Opportunity awareness: Relates to the world of work (paid and unpaid) in which individuals make choices. Individuals need to understand issues and trends that affect education/training and employment opportunities, to learn respect for work of all kinds, and to learn about the full range of opportunities available to them and how to access them.

3. Decision and transition learning: Building capacity to transfer skills to further learning and employment. Involves action plans to accomplish learning goals and includes skills in:
  - career management and decision making;
  - seeking and maintaining jobs;
  - making career transitions;
  - managing unexpected change; and
  - participating in lifelong learning.

Choosing a career is not an objective process and does not occur in a vacuum; it is intricately linked to the systems, family, social, national and global, in which individuals operate and in which the process of career development operates. New constructs such as work role salience, work importance, work-family integration, and career adaptability illustrate this move in the place of work in individuals' lives. Career education itself is being redefined (Patton, 2005b). With the need to revisit the career decision making process several times during a lifetime, Collin and Watts (1996) also emphasised the need for a broader conceptualisation of career development work, or career development practice, to be cast within a learning framework:

- the role of career education in initial education needs to be strengthened and re-cast as the foundations for lifelong career development;
- in career guidance methodology, more attention needs to be paid to the constructivist approaches, helping individuals to develop their subjective career narratives; and
- to provide a formal frame for career narratives but also to maintain the dialectic between subjective and objective careers, career guidance services need to support individuals in regular recording of achievement and action planning. (pp. 394-395)

The work of Collin and Watts (1996) and Patton (2005b) has focused attention on the need to incorporate approaches of constructivist theory into career development learning processes. Constructivism emphasises the proactive nature of human knowing, acknowledging that individuals participate in the construction of their own reality. More emphasis is placed on subjective processes of the individual rather than objectivity. In general, the individual maintains a more active role in the learning process (in formal curriculum and in the counselling process), which is characterised by an active learner/participant being facilitated by a teacher/counsellor, or career development facilitator. The focus of these processes is enabling individuals to act for themselves in creating meaning from and for their lives, thereby preparing themselves for multiple career decision-making phases throughout their lives. An example of such learning is provided by Law's (1996a) career learning theory which described a learning process in which individuals develop an active process of engaging with their world and developing strategies for acting on their world. Law posited a progression from an early experience of sensing career-related information and impressions, through to sifting and sorting these impressions into repeatable and recognisable patterns, and finally through to

focusing and understanding information available about occupations, about self, and about relevant external factors. Law's model emphasised the individual's process of organising and interpreting information from a number of sources. Such processes are accommodated within experiential learning models.

From a constructivist perspective, developing career competencies involves more than just the cognitive activity of aligning self, occupational information and contextual information. It is the processing of this information which is crucial to the individual's construction and integration of knowledge and skills as relevant to him/her self. The individual's career story is the collection of images of the way the individual sees him or herself in the world (Hartung, 2013a; Savickas, 2013a). While the informational aspects of the self (e.g., interest, abilities) and of the world of work constitute the content of the story, it is the individual's constructions of these and the positioning of them within the story – the individual's narrative about self – which provides its uniqueness for each individual. It is the individual's understanding of his/her role in the construction of the story that is a signal point for the authenticity of the learning process (Patton, 2005b).

The changing nature of the workplace and of the role of work in individuals' lives demands a career education curriculum base which is flexible enough to attend to changing age of participants, changing needs related to lifestages of participants, and changing environments in which the learning experiences might be offered. Career development specialists need to identify core activities or competencies which could be tailored to different populations by gender and age across the lifecycle. For example, Turner and Lapan (2013) drew on a range of theory and research to identify their six key tasks of

developing positive career-related self-efficacy beliefs and attributional styles, (b) forming a vocational identity, (c) learning effective social, prosocial, and work-readiness skills and behaviors, (d) constructing an understanding of the self, the world of work and the fit between the two, (e) crystallizing personally valued vocational interests, and (f) becoming empowered to achieve academically and engage in self-regulated learning. (p. 557)

What is imperative however, is that career education becomes an integral part of the primary and secondary school curriculum, available to all students irrespective of educational and career aspirations (see Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; McMahon & Carroll, 1999a, b; McMahon & Patton, 1994; Patton & McMahon, 2001). While these authors described the development and implementation of a career education program in K-12 settings, J. Proctor (2005) specifically described a career education program integrated across the curriculum of a primary school. Schools may not be the only learning site for career education programs for adolescents (Hynes & Hirsch, 2012b). For post-school populations, Savickas (1999b) suggested that core career activities, such as education, counselling, information sources, placement and mentoring, be coordinated and provided in one location, such as public libraries. Within such a model, individuals could be assessed by an

intake officer and directed to the core service which was most appropriate for their career concern.

#### REVIEWING CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING IN SCHOOLS FROM A SYSTEMS THEORY PERSPECTIVE

It is timely to review our practice in schools from a systems theory perspective. A significant feature of a systems theory approach is understanding the interconnectedness of the systems discussed in this chapter, in particular the school, individual, social, and environmental-societal systems and the recursiveness between them. In addition these systems need to be set in a time perspective. Systems theory thinking may be used to review career development learning and the role of career development facilitators. The following provides an example of a process for such a review in the form of questions designed to encourage career development facilitators to reflect on their practice. The reflection will be presented in sections according to the elements of our STF.

##### *The School System*

Career development learning occurs within the context of a school, the school community and the broader community and needs to be reflected in the school goals (McCowan & McKenzie, 1994). It also needs to meet the needs of its particular group of learners. The following questions may guide a review of the learners in a particular school system.

*The learners/consumers.* Increasingly, students are being seen as consumers of a product, education. How well the school system meets their needs has important implications at sociopolitical levels. Therefore it is important to take heed of the needs of the consumer population.

- Who are the learners who attend your school, and what are the specific needs within your learner population?
- Which learners are encouraged and which are discouraged from attendance?
- How is the uniqueness of individual learning styles recognised and catered for?
- What happens to those learners whose needs are not catered for?
- Are learners prepared to be and capable of being lifelong learners?
- How is career development learning viewed by the learners?
- What input do the learners have into career development learning?
- Is the concept of lifelong career development understood by learners?
- Is the career decision making in which learners participate set within the perspective of lifelong career development?
- What provision is made for follow up with individual learners?
- Are learners empowered with the processes of career self management?
- Are learners equipped with an understanding of the future world of work as well as the present world of work?
- Is lifelong career development learning available to all learners in your school?

*Career development learning.* Based on the STF, career development learning should provide an awareness of the following: the lifelong nature of career development, the range and nature of the influences on career development, processes for coping with the ongoing changes experienced throughout career development, and an awareness of the future world of work. In addition, programs need to be developmental and attend to the needs of particular individuals or groups of individuals. Career development facilitators reflecting on career development learning in their school could be guided by the following questions:

- What is the place of career development learning in your school?
- Who in the school supports career development learning?
- What is the role of the career development facilitator in the school?
- How is the position of career development facilitator viewed by the school administration?
- How is the position of career development facilitator viewed by the other staff?
- How are time, resource and staff allocations determined by the school administration?
- Is the focus of career development learning on career decision-making or career development?
- In career development learning what emphasis is placed on influences other than interests and abilities?
- Is the concept of lifelong career development understood by the school staff?

*Career development facilitators* Career development facilitators are also lifelong learners involved in a process of lifelong career development, a process shaped by a range of past, present and future influences. It is important for career development facilitators to have an understanding of what has influenced their own career development, the values and attitudes they hold, and their current stage of career development. Personal reflection could be guided by the following questions:

- Am I a lifelong learner who is continually updating my own learning, including: personal learning, trends in career development theory, labour market knowledge and trends, and teaching and learning practices?
- What values and attitudes do I hold in relation to career development and the world of work?
- What is the pattern of my own career development?
- Do I understand the relationship between career education and career development?
- Do I oversimplify career development learning?
- Do I facilitate learning about the processes involved in career development as well as provide information?
- Do I understand experiential learning theory and know how to apply it?
- What career theories inform my work?
- Do I take a systemic view of my work?
- Do I understand the implications of the systems world view in terms of my own personal views of learning and career development practice?

*The Social System*

Recursiveness between career development facilitators and the social system of the school has the potential to enhance the career development learning outcomes for young people.

- In what ways can I encourage parents and members of the wider school community (e.g., employers) to be involved in the career development learning of the young people in my school system?
- In what ways can I facilitate understanding of lifelong learning and career development with parents and members of the wider school community?
- What links have been forged between the school system and the local community system?
- In what ways is the school system responsive to the needs of the local community system?
- What roles do school personnel play or need to play in relation to the broader school community?
- How does the school community communicate its needs to the school?

*The Environmental-societal System*

The recursiveness between career development facilitators and the environmental-societal system has been demonstrated throughout this chapter. Understanding this recursiveness and the nature of the influences may assist career development facilitators to proactively facilitate career development learning.

- What are the major influences impacting on career education at an international, national, state and local level?
- What are the policies affecting youth, training, and higher education that may apply to the career development of the young people with whom I work? How do these affect the role that I need to play in my school?
- What resources may be accessed from national, state and local bodies?
- What programs or funding are available that may benefit specific groups of learners with whom I work?

*The Context of Time*

As discussed previously there is an increased need for our school system, and in particular career development learning to be shaped by the needs of the future.

- In what ways am I informing others in the system of employment market trends and society of the future?
- What time perspective is guiding the career development learning that I facilitate?

## CONCLUSION

Career development learning in schools establishes a pattern of lifelong learning. The content and process of career development learning is recursively linked to the needs and circumstances of the social and environmental-societal systems in which school systems exist. An examination of the STF demonstrates its applicability in the school setting. Specifically, it can be used to inform the input and processes of career education programs, review the roles of career development facilitators, examine the relationships between students, career development facilitators, the school, and the broader school system. Awareness and understanding of the STF can only enhance the work already being done by career development facilitators.

Application of the STF will assist career development learning to have an individual in context in focus. Thus career practitioners may draw from a range of approaches, theories, and assessment instruments to provide intentional and meaningful career learning for young people. In particular the STF places emphasis on individual learners in context and empowers them to be lifelong learners and constructors of their own careers.



## CAREER COUNSELLING SYSTEMS

A useful starting point for this chapter on career counselling is to consider one of its earliest conceptualisations as:

the process of helping a person to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of himself and of his role in the world or work, to test this concept against reality, and to convert it into reality, with satisfaction to himself and to society. (Super, 1951, p. 92)

Although over 60 years old, this prophetic statement represents an accurate reflection of career counselling's present day situation in two respects. First, it recognises the inherently personal nature of career counselling as a form of assisting individuals with their career decisions and transitions. Second, it recognises a more recent trend that has seen policy makers take an active interest in career guidance including career counselling because of its potential as a "public good" (Watts & Sultana, 2004) that can benefit society. Thus, it has been claimed that career guidance "operates at the interface between personal and societal needs, between individual and opportunity structures, between private and public identities" (Watts, 1996a, p. 229). Increasingly career guidance is being seen not only in terms of its individual worth, but in terms of its economic worth to nations (Watts, 1999a, b; Watts & Sultana, 2004), making it a sociopolitical activity. Such thinking has introduced a tension into the field related to "Who owns guidance?" and "Who is it for?" (Plant, 2012, p. 92).

The origins of such tension lie in radical economic and societal change resulting from rapid technological advances and globalisation. In the contemporary world of work where secure, permanent and tenured employment is less a feature, it has been predicted that individuals may access career services several times as they make repeated transitions between learning and work across the lifespan (e.g., P. S. Jarvis, 2003). Career guidance therefore needs to expand access and services for people across the lifespan (e.g., Watts & Sultana, 2004). Paradoxically, at a time when career counselling could take a more pivotal role in the lives of individuals and society as demonstrated in chapter 10, the capacity of career counselling to do so has been questioned (OECD, 2004; Savickas, 1996b, 2003) and there have been repeated calls for the field to re-vision, reinvent, and revise its practices. Indeed, more than a decade ago, the future and possible direction of career counselling was the subject of a special issue of *The Career Development Quarterly* (Cook, 2003). Challenges remain. Savickas (2008b) reminds us that the field has responded to such challenges before and contends that the more recent emphasis on career

construction and self-construction is the reinvention that is needed “to remain relevant and useful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (p. 11).

This chapter focuses on career counselling as a response to the needs of individuals in rapidly changing social and environmental-societal contexts. First a brief history of career counselling that contextualises challenges and debates in the field will be presented followed by a discussion of the predominant trait and factor approach to career counselling. Second, the more recent adoption of approaches that are influenced by constructivism and social constructionism will be considered in relation to the counselling relationship, the counselling process, the use of language, narrative approaches, and career assessment. Finally, the Systems Theory Framework will be presented as a means of conceptualising career counselling. Its conceptual understandings and practical considerations for career counselling will be outlined and its cross cultural applications examined.

#### HISTORY OF CAREER COUNSELLING

With its genesis in the early 1900s, vocational guidance as it was then known, was unified theoretically and practically in the work of Frank Parsons (1909) who advanced a “three-step formula” that became the “first conceptual framework for career decision-making” and the “first conceptual guide for career counselors” (D. Brown, 2002a, p. 4). Lasting testament to the work of Parsons is that his formula has endured as the “fundamental blueprint” for the practice of career counselling to the present day (Lent & S. D. Brown, 2013, p. 21). Indeed, Parsons believed that his process of matching persons to vocations was best done by career counsellors (Porfeli, 2009). The work of Parsons and the beginning of the vocational guidance movement was a response to the needs of individuals who required assistance with occupational choice during the period of rapid and dramatic change early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the industrial society overtook what had been up until then a largely agrarian society (Savickas, 2003, 2008b). As described in part one of this book, Parson’s work was followed by a proliferation of career theories which added great depth to the career field. Such theories provided useful accounts of career development but were, however, not theories of career counselling (Savickas, 2011a; Savickas & Lent, 1994). For much of the time since the early 1900s (as discussed in part two), theory grew out of a logical positivist position reflected in Parsons (1909) formula, and practice was cast in the same mould, that of the trait and factor, or matching approaches. Such theory and practice assumes that individual behaviour is observable, measurable and linear, that individuals can be studied separately from their environments and, consequently, that the contexts within which individuals live and work are of less importance than their actions (D. Brown, 2002a). Thus career counselling based on the logical-positivist worldview tends to be expert driven, reliant on assessment and diagnosis, and generally follows a linear sequence through steps such as analysis, synthesis, diagnosis, prognosis, counseling and follow-up (e.g., Williamson, 1939, 1965). Such approaches became known as test and tell or matching models. Savickas (2011a) regards such models as vocational guidance and cites the application of Holland’s

(1997) theory of vocational choice as an example. Specifically, applying Holland's theory involves enhancing self-knowledge and occupational knowledge in order to match self to occupation.

This formulaic decontextualised approach to career counselling that remains dominant to the present time (Lent & S. D. Brown, 2013) sits at the heart of concerns about the capacity of the field to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Unlike the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the predominant issue dealt with in career counselling was the occupational choice of the dominant client group, school leavers, career counsellors in the 21<sup>st</sup> century face a diverse range of clients and an equally diverse range of counselling issues such as occupational choice, learning across the lifespan, work/life balance, workplace harassment, international work experience, career transition, unemployment, managing dual careers, stress and financial management. Moreover, career counselling is being introduced in diverse cultures and countries.

Reliance on theory and practices that are predominantly North American and Eurocentric in focus has been questioned and the development of approaches that reflect the nations and cultures of the clients they serve has been encouraged (e.g., Arulmani, 2010a, b; Leong & Pearce, 2011; Leung & Yuen, 2012; McMahon & Yuen, 2010; Mkhize, 2012; M. Watson et al., 2011; Savickas, 2003; M. Watson & Stead, 2002). Recently, a book devoted to global issues and challenges facing career development (M. Watson & McMahon, 2012) has been published.

Much attention has been paid in part three of this book to what Lent (1996) described as a "collective wake-up call" (p. 59). Just as vocational guidance provided a response to societal changes at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so too is a response now being sought from career counselling. A failure to respond would be to the detriment of both the profession itself and those who need its services (e.g., Harris-Bowlsbey, 1996; Patton & McMahon, 2006a; OECD, 2004). Importantly, responses are evident in theory and in practice. Theories that accommodate greater complexity have been proposed (e.g., Super's 1990, 1992 segmental model, developmental-contextual theory [Vondracek et al., 1986], social cognitive career theory [S. D. Brown & Lent, 2005; Lent, 2013; Lent & S. D. Brown, 2013, Lent et al., 1994, 2002], the Systems Theory Framework of career development [McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a], and career construction theory [Savickas, 2002, 2005, 2013a]) that assume expanded definitions of career and career development and locate career in the context of people's lives. Comparatively recently, some career theories have addressed Osipow's (1996) concern that career theorists "have sought to apply theory to counselling only as an afterthought" (p. 404) by bridging the gap between theory and practice through their concomitant application to career counselling (e.g., career construction theory [Savickas, 2013a]; chaos theory [Pryor & Bright, 2005, 2011]; self-construction theory [Guichard, 2009]; Systems Theory Framework of career development [Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a]) and thus could be viewed also as theories of career counselling.

For example, the holistic metatheoretical Systems Theory Framework of career development (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) was

proposed as a response to debates of relevance and of convergence in career theory (see Savickas & Lent, 1994). The STF's capacity to provide consistency across career theory, career counselling and career assessment is evidenced in subsequent publications (e.g., N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005; McIlveen & Patton, 2010; McMahon, 2005a, 2007a, 2011; McMahon, Patton, & M. Watson, 2004, 2005a, b; McMahon & M. Watson, 2008b, 2010, 2013; McMahon, M. Watson, & Patton, 2005, 2013a, b, 2014; McMahon & M. Watson, 2007, 2008b, 2010; Patton & McMahon, 2006a, b; Patton, McMahon & M. Watson, 2006). Approaches such as Conyne and Cook's (2004a, b) ecological model, and Chen's (2002) application of narrative enquiry to vocational psychology are also illustrative of the development of approaches that reflect more holistic understandings of career and are responsive to societal changes.

#### *The Trait and Factor Approach*

Despite advances in theory and practice, the dominant paradigm of career counselling is still that of the trait and factor approach (Lent & S. D. Brown, 2013). Career counsellors have been slow to move from the familiar and comfortable positivist process of information giving and matching the person to the job (D. Brown & Brooks, 1996b; Patton & McMahon, 2006a; Savickas, 2008b). Over two decades ago, Peterson et al. (1991) commented that career counselling had changed little since the days of Parsons, with counsellors' activities typically including: listening to concerns about making career decisions, seeking to understand these concerns, assisting in making connections to opportunities, formulating alternatives, and helping clients evaluate occupational alternatives to arrive at tentative choices. Little has changed with Lent and S. D. Brown (2013) observing that Parsons' tripartite formula still provides the "fundamental blueprint" for career counselling (p. 21) despite its simplicity (Sharf, 2013).

Rounds and Tracey (1990) contended that the trait and factor approach is predominantly a problem-solving approach with emphasis on diagnosis and assessment. This is depicted in Williamson's (1939, 1965) six step process of career counselling which includes analysis, synthesis, diagnosis, prognosis, counselling and follow up. Analysis was the process whereby the counsellor collected data about the client, which was then summarised in order to identify 'career problems' which were seen as "no choice; uncertain choice; unwise choice; discrepancy between interests and aptitudes" (Isaacson & D. Brown, 1993, p. 372). Prognosis involved predictions about the possible success of the individual with regard to their goals. Counselling occurred if the individual had career problems or had made an inappropriate choice. Follow up examined the viability of the individual's course of action. A feature of trait and factor approaches to career counselling continues to be their reliance on assessment (Sharf, 2013; Zunker, 2011) which remains a fundamental difference between counselling and career counselling. Essentially, trait and factor approaches rely on "assessment of characteristics of the person and the job" (Sharf, 2013, p. 25).

The historical value of the trait and factor approach is its ability to demonstrate career counselling's origins as a process which was counsellor directed, where the counsellor was the 'expert', and where counselling was centred on career choice only. In fact, Rounds and Tracey (1990) commented that "the first four steps were the province of the professional" (p. 4). Decision making was thought to be a rational process, and there was a narrow focus on matching interests, abilities and world of work knowledge. An outcome of this approach is that clients learn a basis for present and future problem-solving and decision-making. Career counsellors using trait and factor approaches pay little attention to the broad contextual system in which clients live. The trait and factor approach however, until comparatively recently, was one of the few career counselling models linked to studies of vocational behaviour and also to a counselling theory, that of the recognised problem-solving approach that is conducted by trained counsellors (Rounds & Tracey, 1990).

Trait and factor counselling has more recently been informed by person-environment fit theory because of a shift from the descriptive matching models that emphasise congruence to dynamic, process oriented models that emphasise person-environment fit. While the dynamic person-environment fit models have made a conceptual contribution to career theory, they have not yet contributed in a significant way to career counselling practice. However, ecological counselling (Conyne & Cook, 2004a, b) has been proffered as an innovative approach to conceptualising person-environment interaction. These authors claim that while the ecological perspective is "most closely related to person-environment (P-E) theory" (p. 8), its uniqueness is derived from the integration of constructivist principles.

The trait and factor approach has been the subject of much criticism (e.g., Blustein, 2006; Krumboltz, 1994; Patton & McMahon, 2006a; Savickas, 1996b) even though it is widely used and will continue to make a contribution to career theory and to career counselling in the future (Zunker, 2011). An over-emphasis on the trait and factor model has led to the long standing perception that career counselling consists of nothing more than a quick and simple matching process (e.g., Healy, 1990; Krumboltz, 1993) caricatured as "three interviews and a cloud of dust" (Crites, 1981, p. 49). Krumboltz (1994) commented that "trait and factor theory nonetheless paints a picture, creates an image, and draws a map that oversimplifies the complexities of helping people with a wide range of career problems" (p. 15). One of the most common criticisms of trait and factor approaches is 'oversimplification' (Sharf, 2013) which centres around reliance on diagnosis, psychometric information, occupational classification and information and little attention to the contextual location or subjective experience of individuals in relation to their careers. Trait and factor theories do not help us to understand the increasingly complex issues brought about by today's world of work, including job-related phobias, sexual harassment, job burnout, dual career families, coping with unemployment, or job seeking. They also do not address the emotional aspects of these issues. Moreover, trait and factor approaches are predicated on choice and a number of authors have observed that many people do not have

choice in both western (e.g., Blustein, 2006; Roberts, 2012) and non-western (e.g., M. Watson, 2013) contexts.

The trait and factor approach to career counselling finds itself in the curious position of being both much maligned and at the same time the most commonly used approach. This unusual position may be understood from the systems theory perspective in terms of time. Trait and factor approaches evolved at a time when occupational choice was the predominant issue brought to career counsellors by clients once in a lifetime (this is reflected in the term vocational guidance which was prevalent at that time; Savickas, 2008b, 2011). However in today's world that perspective only provides a partial fit. People change jobs several times in a lifetime and occupational choice is only one of a myriad of concerns that individuals bring to career counsellors. Thus it seems that the map (to use the metaphor of Krumboltz, 1994) of career counselling has broadened since the time of Parsons and Williamson. Rather than encompassing the whole map, the trait and factor approach now only occupies a section of it (Savickas, 2008b, 2011a). Therefore, as evidenced by current practice, there is still a definite place in the new map for trait and factor counselling (Zunker, 2011).

### *Signs of Change*

The complexity of the new map is evidenced by more holistic career development theories that encompass the social and environmental-societal systems and lifelong career development that are not reflected in the oversimplification inherent to trait and factor theory and career counselling. Savickas (1996a) asked "How do counselors apply theories that are partial and simple to clients who are whole and complex?" (p. 193). In this regard, Vondracek et al. (1986) claimed that the trait and factor approach is incompatible with their developmental-contextual model which illustrates the complexity of career development, and that more sophisticated approaches to career counselling are required.

In a seminal article, Savickas (1993) urged that career counselling "keep pace with our society's movement to a postmodern era" (p. 205). The field of counselling has responded to societal changes by moving towards what has been described as the "fourth wave" (O'Hanlon, 1993, p. 3), that is constructivist approaches including narrative therapy. As reflected in this chapter, career counselling is still based in the problem solving mode or "second wave". In the 2006 edition of this book, there was evidence of a distinct move towards constructivist approaches consistent with the "fourth wave" (e.g., Amundson, 1998; Bloch, 2004, 2005; Bright & Pryor, 2005; Chen, 1997, 2002; Collin, 1996; Conyne & Cook, 2004a, b; Law, 2003; McMahon & Patton, 2006a; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; Peavy, 1997; 2004; Pryor & Bright, 2005; Reid, 2003a, b; Richardson, 1996; Young & Valach, 1996). Since that time there has been a proliferation of literature that attests to the field's commitment to revise its practice to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century needs (e.g., Amundson, 2009; Di Fabio & J. G. Maree, 2013; K. Maree, 2007, 2010; McMahon & M. Watson, 2011; Savickas, 2011c; M. Watson & McMahon, 2012). Savickas (1993) suggested that this trend towards

constructivist approaches reflects a move away from “seeking truth to participation in conversations; from objectivity to perspectivity”, and that career counselling is “reforming into an interpretive discipline” (p. 205).

Thus career counselling can be seen as an evolving profession. In reality, career counselling has emerged as a profession in its own right only comparatively recently. For much of its history, career counselling was rarely differentiated from vocational or career guidance and it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that the term ‘career guidance and counselling’ gave counselling and guidance equal attention (Herr, 1997). Herr identified five observations about the changes in career counselling; specifically:

1. its principal content is the perceptions, anxieties, information deficits, work personalities, competencies, and motives that persons experience in their interactions with their external environment;
2. career counseling is not a singular process, but a term used to summarize a range of interventions;
3. career counseling is no longer conceived as a process principally focused on ensuring that adolescents make a wise choice of an initial job;
4. career counseling may be considered the preferred intervention of choice, but may be one of a program of interventions to deal with emotional or behavioral disorders that accompany or confound the career problem;
5. career counseling may best be thought of as a continuum of intervention processes. (pp. 85-86)

Herr noted that these changes in the content and processes of career counselling have not occurred in a vacuum, but rather are in response to prevailing societal conditions. This is reflected in Watts’ (1996a) suggestion that closer links be forged between career counselling and financial counselling, stress counselling and relationship counselling which have emerged in response to society’s changing needs. His reasoning illustrates the recursiveness of systems theory in that career counsellors may be able to assist individuals with the anxiety, uncertainty, stress and ambiguity of social change and to negotiate work, family and relationship roles.

Related to Watts’ predictions is long standing debate about the fusion of career and personal counselling (Bingham & Ward, 2002; Hackett, 1993; Krumboltz, 1993; Liebenberg & Akhurst, 2010; Subich, 1993). Early in the debate, Burlew (1996) explained that “there is no way to separate issues with which clients come into counselling because they’re housed in one body, one mind, and one soul”, and that “you can’t pull a person apart and dissect mind and spirit issues as clearly as you can separate, for example, the heart from the rest of the body” (p. 375). Imbimbo (1994) suggested that the distinction between career counselling and personal counselling may actually be more in the perception of how the counsellor sees their role than with the client. For example, the six step process described by Williamson (1939, 1965) could be conducted regardless of the client, and could become rote and repetitive. Alternatively, a counsellor guided by a constructivist view could enter each encounter with a client as a unique experience directed by

the client rather than by a formulaic linear process. The potential fusion between career counselling and personal counselling represents a challenge to the problem-solving traditions of career counselling and draws attention to the multifaceted complexity of people's lives and the need for more holistic career counselling approaches to remain relevant. Individuals cannot separate career issues from personal issues for as Savickas (1993) noted "career is personal" (p. 212). From a systems theory perspective, the separation of personal from career issues is not possible because of the recursive interaction between the elements of the individual's subsystems which cannot be separated from each other (Patton & McMahon, 2006a).

### CONSTRUCTIVISM

As previously mentioned, there is a trend toward the use of constructivist approaches to make career counselling more relevant and responsive to the times and to the individuals who are its consumers. Constructivist approaches also reduce career counselling's image as a simplistic process. The move toward constructivist approaches has to some extent been heralded and influenced by holistic understandings of career, the inseparability of career and life, and consequent discussion about the fusion of career counselling and personal counselling where constructivist approaches are more established. Patton (2007b) concluded that career counselling founded on constructivist principles is "a personal, meaningful, emotional, action-oriented approach ... in which client and counsellor collaborate. (p. 130).

More recently, social constructionism's influence on career theory and career counselling has been discussed and confusion has emerged related to the differences between constructivism and social constructionism. Essentially, constructivism emphasises that meaning is created through individual cognitive processes and social constructionism views meaning as being created through social processes and interaction (Young & Collin, 2004). Raskin (2002) adopted the term "constructivisms" and explained that all of the constructivist psychologies have a focus on personal meaning making and that "the commonalities among these approaches outweigh the points of divergence" (p. 1). Reflecting Raskin's position, D. Brown (1996b) presented four assumptions of constructivism and subsequently listed the same assumptions as belonging to social constructionism (D. Brown, 2002a). The four assumptions are:

1. All aspects of the universe are interconnected; it is impossible to separate figure from ground, subject from object, people from their environments.
2. There are no absolutes; thus human functioning cannot be reduced to laws or principles, and cause and effect cannot be inferred.
3. Human behavior can only be understood in the context in which it occurs.
4. The subjective frame of reference of human beings is the only legitimate source of knowledge. Events occur outside human beings. As individuals



understand their environments and participate in these events, they define themselves and their environments. (D. Brown, 2002a, p. 14)

These assumptions are clearly in keeping with the elements of systems theory discussed in chapter 8. In particular, systems theory emphasises connectedness and the importance of wholes rather than parts. Thus an individual cannot be separated from their context, and behaviour cannot be accounted for in a linear way. Knowledge is constructed within individuals in relation to their experience in social contexts, and cannot be taught. Indeed, constructivists believe that there is no absolute truth, that truth lies where individuals are and in how they derive meaning from their environment and their experiences with others (M. Watson, 2006). Therefore theory cannot be applied to individuals; individuals construct their own personal theory. Similarly, Mahoney (2003) identified five basic assumptions of constructivism, specifically active agency, order, self, social-symbolic relatedness, and lifespan development which are evident across diverse constructivist theories. These assumptions portray individuals as being embedded in their systems of influence and actively constructing their lives and personal identities over time through their relationships with others and the meaning they ascribe to their experiences.

Over a decade ago, Granvold (1996) claimed that constructivism represents “a formidable challenge to the assumptions about reality, knowledge, and causality” (p. 345) held by adherents of traditional positivist approaches to career counselling. Such a challenge manifested in career guidance and counselling through an either/or tension that emerged in the literature which was described by Sampson (2009) as an “unnecessary divorce” because positivist and constructivist approaches were viewed as “mutually exclusive” (p. 91). Sampson concluded that it is more appropriate to adopt a both/and perspective in order to appreciate the contributions and potential of the two approaches which may otherwise be viewed as “two seemingly irreconcilable viewpoints” (Hartung, 2007, p. 103). Hartung cited the example of career construction theory which is grounded in both philosophical viewpoints as evidence of the rapprochement that is possible. Thus, in proposing life designing as a way forward for career counselling, Savickas et al. (2009, p. 240) emphasised the need to build on “the great inheritance of the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while increasing its richness”.

Fundamental to the constructivist approach is that human knowing is proactive and that individuals actively participate in the creation of their own reality. In career counselling this occurs through the use of language and dialogue with the counsellor. Language is fundamental to the creation of meaning and knowledge. Knowledge is shaped through dialogue between the career counsellor and the client. It is through language that individuals construct their own reality. The process of dialogue between counsellor and client, and the construction of a new reality is termed coconstruction. Thus, through language, individuals construct the story of their careers. The influence of constructivism will now be discussed in relation to the counselling relationship, the counselling process, the use of language, narrative approaches, and career assessment.

*The Counselling Relationship*

Traditional career counselling approaches have seen career counsellors take on an expert role to solve the client's problems, to explain through assessment, or to provide advice. Savickas (1993, 2011a) contends that career counselling has both a "communication dimension" and a "relationship dimension" which has traditionally received less emphasis (Savickas, 1993). For over two decades, career counsellors therefore have been criticised for not paying enough attention to the working alliance or relationship with the client (Meara & Patton, 1994).

In constructivist approaches to career counselling the quality of the relationship is essential, and characteristics such as acceptance, understanding, trust, and caring are critical (Granvold, 1996). In this regard, Amundson (1998, 2009) reminds us of the importance of Rogers' (1951) necessary conditions for counselling, specifically genuineness, unconditional positive regard and empathic understanding, which he regards as "essential building blocks" for career counselling relationships. In addition, Amundson suggests a fourth "building block", flexibility, which is the career counsellors' ability to be imaginative, creative, and willing to be open to new situations. Such relationships are more indicative of a "working partnership" in which both "helper and help-seeker" (Peavy, 2004, p. 20) are actively engaged or a partnership (Pierce & Gibbons, 2012). "The counselling relationship is not that of one-who-knows and one-who-does-not-know but rather a relationship of negotiation and co-participation" (Peavy, p. 20). Amundson (1998, 2009) advocates creating a "mattering" (Schlossberg et al., 1989) climate where clients feel listened to and that the career counsellor "genuinely cares about their well-being" (Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey, & Niles, 2005, p. 39). Amundson et al. describe the counselling relationship using the PLEASE acronym that refers to Protecting (creating a safe space for counselling), Listening (hearing the client's story), Enquiring (being curious about and interested in the client's story), Acknowledging (using verbal and non-verbals cues), Supporting (encouraging, praising, and identifying positives), and Exchanging (appropriate self-disclosure). Similarly, Savickas (2011a) suggests that the "relationship dimension" of career counselling should involve engagement, interaction and encouragement.

Accordingly career counsellors attempt not to be viewed as an expert or as an authority who draws conclusions from information (K. J. Gergen, 1993). For example, while assessment data may be gathered, it should not be objectively presented as a statement of fact by career counsellors and should not be uncritically accepted by clients (Sampson, 2009). Rather its meaning has to be interpreted through language by the individual client in dialogue with the counsellor (see McMahon & M. Watson, 2012b; M. Watson & McMahon, 2014). Indeed, Sampson (2009) advocates the use of assessment as an aid in decision making and as a "stimulus for exploration as opposed to providing the answer" (p. 93). This approach is quite different from that conducted by trait and factor counsellors who largely controlled the process, for as Peavy (2004) suggested, all parties in the career counselling relationship are viewed as having a valuable contribution to make. Patton and McMahon (2006a) described career counselling as a space for

reflection. In such an environment, clients may be able to learn about themselves and to make sense of their lives (Westergaard, 2012).

### *The Counselling Process*

Perhaps because of its reliance on assessment, traditional positivist approaches to career counselling have seen the counsellor in a central position, often as a provider of information or in a directive role. However as the counselling relationship described above suggests, constructivists are less directive and facilitate a process of exploration and restructuring. In this process the counsellor and client collaborate to construct and reconstruct meaning in the client's life through processes such as information sharing, interpretation, supportiveness, encouragement, structuring, and challenge (Granvold, 1996; McMahon & M. Watson, 2012a, b, 2013; Savickas, 2011a). Using this approach, there is a shift away from 'fixing' the presenting problem. Peavy (1997) believed that career counsellors are privileged to hear the stories of many clients and to work with them towards re-authoring more preferred futures, and Amundson (2003a, 2009) claimed that one of the gifts career counsellors can offer their clients is an opportunity to tell their stories and in so doing develop new stories of confidence, optimism and hope. The emphasis of these authors focuses on the personal meaning ascribed by the client to the problem which is explored and possible new meanings constructed from which goals are developed and outcomes achieved.

Peavy (1992) raised questions about the language of career counselling and advocated the term "fruitfulness" to replace the term "outcomes". He suggested that the career counselling process should be fruitful, that is "it should provide a re-constructing or changed outlook on some aspect of life" (p. 221). Savickas (1993) described a move away from trying to 'fit' individuals into a mainstream culture toward affirming diversity and enabling individuals to plan their own life. In addition, he suggests that increasingly career counselling will be about "life design and the place of the work-role within a constellation of life roles" (Savickas, 1993, p. 212). Since 2009, the term life design has gained more traction in the field through the formation of the international life design team (Savickas et al., 2009) which has promoted life design as a paradigm for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Peavy also suggested that the term "experiment" be used instead of "intervention", and that career counselling be viewed as a "fruitful experiment" as the "helping alliance itself is an experimental structure" (p. 222). "Experiments" are any planned interventions the counsellor may use in cooperation with the client "in order that the client may come to think, act, and feel more productively in relation to some dilemma or trouble in life" (p. 222). Peavy suggested that there are four levels of experiments, imaginal or embodied, thinking, simulated, and real world experiments. Guided fantasy or focusing activities are examples of imaginal experiments, whereas the use of repertory grids, critical self-reflection, genograms, and the Systems Theory Framework could be used to facilitate thinking experiments. Simulated experiments could be facilitated by processes from gestalt therapy and psychodrama such as role play and two chair technique. Real world

experiments are generally done outside the therapy setting and involve interactions with individuals other than the therapist, for example work experience or work shadowing, and applying for a job.

It is clear that the process of constructivist career counselling places emphasis on counselling factors not as evident in the trait and factor approach. In this regard, Peavy (1997) suggested the three main tasks of a counsellor as follows:

1. to enter into sensible and trustworthy communication with the other,
2. to develop a mutual understanding of the particular difficulty which the other faces, and
3. to plan and construct activity projects which are designed to:
  - a) increase self-responsibility and personal control,
  - b) increase the other's meaningful participation in social life, and
  - c) help the other choose and move toward preferred futures. (p. 50)

Similarly, Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey and Niles (2005) suggested that typical counselling goals would include the development of a strong, supportive client/counsellor relationship (as previously discussed), fostering personal responsibility in clients in order that they are able to construct and implement personally meaningful plans, and assisting clients to locate and construct their personal plans with the realities of their context (or system of influences). C. Campbell and Ungar (2004a, b) proposed engaging with clients in seven aspects of life/work design specifically knowing what they want, knowing what they have, knowing what they hear, knowing what constrains them, mapping their preferred story, growing into their story and growing out of their story. As reflected in the work of Peavy (1997), Amundson et al. (2005), Savickas (2011a), and C. Campbell and Ungar, career counsellors believe that an enhanced and agentic role of the individuals with whom they work is one of the most striking features of the career counselling process informed by constructivism.

In line with the basic assumptions of constructivism suggested by Mahoney (2003), specifically active agency, order, self, social-symbolic relatedness, and lifespan development, Peavy (1992) suggested that there are four dimensions for career counsellors to keep in mind if they are to be helpful to clients. They are relationship, agency, meaning-making, and negotiation, all of which Peavy noted can be framed as questions by the career counsellor, for example:

1. How can I form a *cooperative alliance* with this client? (Relationship factor)
2. How can I encourage the *self-helpfulness* of this client? (Agency factor)
3. How can I help this client to *elaborate and evaluate his or her constructions and meanings* germane to their decisions? (Meaning-making factor)
4. How can I help this client to *reconstruct and negotiate* personally meaningful and socially supportable realities? (Negotiation factor). (Peavy, 1992, p. 221)

Constructivists place emphasis on the life-span developmental history of the client as told by the life stories they bring to counselling. This emphasis is reflected in the various constructivist approaches to career counselling depicted in McMahon and Patton (2006a) and is illustrated by the example presented in chapter 9. Understanding individuals' present situations in the context of their past fosters the meaningful construction of their preferred futures. That is, the present dilemma of the individual in chapter 9 was influenced (among other things) by his values, which could be traced back to his family of origin, and by his desire for more autonomy in his work in the future.

Emotion and subjective experience are also important in constructivist approaches, and their inclusion in the career counselling process responds to criticism that emotion and social meaning have been missing from career counselling (Kidd, 2004, 2008, 2011; Young & Valach, 1996). A primary focus of career counselling has been on the objective career which is evident through observable and visible events, positions, behaviours and activities. By contrast, the subjective career that is less visible and less tangible and is concerned with individuals' experience of their career has received much less attention despite it being discussed as early as 1937 (E. Hughes). More recently, Savickas (2013a) claimed that the subjective career emanates from the "thought or mental activity that constructs a story about one's working life" and that it imposes "meaning and direction on vocational behaviour" (Savickas, 2013a, p. 151). Savickas advocates the use of early recollections in career exploration however a range of interventions including experiential interventions may be used. Reflecting the closer relationship between personal counselling and career counselling, approaches from gestalt therapy and psychodrama such as empty chair technique, behaviour rehearsal, guided imagery, and role play may be used.

One of the most common criticisms levelled at constructivist approaches to career counselling, is their failure to adequately address the "but how do we do it?" question that is frequently asked by students and practitioners (Reid, 2006). Reid discussed whether constructivism is too abstract, esoteric and unconnected to day-to-day realities, too focused on understanding with not enough attention paid to action, and too dependent on therapeutic counselling. She also pondered how constructivist approaches fit with existing approaches to career counselling. In conclusion, Reid observed that constructivist approaches are "a work in progress" that are gaining ground in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as they offer real potential to develop career counselling practice for the demands of a postmodern society. She suggested that

a shift to placing meaning at the forefront of career counselling is a good foundation upon which academics, researchers, trainers and practitioners can build" and that "constructivist approaches seem like the way forward for a more holistic, ethically motivated and politically aware form of practice. (p. 38)

Specifically in response to the largely unanswered "but how do we do it?" question, McMahon and Patton (2006a) and subsequently K. Maree (2007, 2010)

provided examples of a number of constructivist approaches and activities that could be used in career counselling. L. Cochran (1997) also attempted to answer this question in his seminal text on a narrative approach to career counselling. Brott (2001) presented a storied approach to career counselling in which she described the three interwoven phases of co-construction, deconstruction and construction. In essence co-construction is the process through which client and counsellor collaborate in the telling of the past and present chapters of the client's career story. Deconstruction is the process elaborating meaning by uncovering patterns and themes and construction is the building or creation of future chapters of the client's career story. These phases underpin all constructivist approaches to career counselling (e.g., C. Campbell and Ungar's [2004a, b] postmodern approach; Conyne and Cook's [2004a, b] constructivist ecological counselling). More recently, in response to the "but how do we do it" question, McMahon, M. Watson, Chetty, and Hoelson (2012a, b) have investigated the process of career counselling and how key constructs such as meaning making and agency are facilitated. As evidenced by a proliferation of literature since the last edition of this book, the field is beginning to offer greater guidance for practitioners wanting to use constructivist approaches to career counselling. A common theme throughout this literature is that the career counselling process from a constructivist perspective is more customised to individual clients, more creative, less directive, less routinised and therefore less likely to operate according to the linear processes that have long been associated with career counselling.

### *Language*

The precision of language and its power in constructing meaning is fundamental to constructivism (this has previously been discussed in chapter 11). In essence, language constructs our reality, and the meaning we make of the world (Berg & de Shazer, 1993). Herr (1997) discussed the importance of language from two perspectives. First, language helps to define our profession. Second, it forms the basis of our professional interactions with clients. Each of these will be discussed.

Herr (1997) explained how the meaning of professional terms such as employment counselling and appraisal varies across time and across cultures. Similarly, the language used to describe our profession has differed. In its early days vocational guidance was the term used as counselling had not yet emerged as a profession and career and vocation were used synonymously. Over time our understanding of vocational guidance has evolved in response to advances in career theory and changes in the world of work (Herr, 2001). In response to advances in our field, the terms vocational psychologist, vocational counsellor, and career counsellor were used, and more recently the terms life coach and career coach have emerged. In addition, the terms school counsellor and guidance counsellor are used. Thus, as a profession in which the basis of our interactions with our consumers is language, and the unifying theme is career development, we find ourselves in a position of many occupational titles, none of which connote exactly what it is we do. Terminology such as this is a vexed issue that warrants

consideration. How can our consumers know what to expect from our services or which professional group provides a better service? How do we make sense of the competition? What is it that all of these people do that is so different, and what can I expect from one that I cannot expect of another? Do we, the professionals, know who we are and what we have to offer?

Maybe having many occupational titles is appropriate given our complex times? Patton and McMahon (1999, 2006a) suggested that an appropriate term for the profession would be that of career development facilitator (see chapter 10). This term provides a conceptual link between theory and practice and draws attention to the theme which underpins our profession. In addition, it provides a developmental perspective at a time when increasing numbers of clients will return to career counsellors at different times in their lives. It also reflects current thinking on career as process, as facilitation relates to process and does not connote the nature of the relationship. Indeed, the term career development facilitator has been adopted in the United States of America and is understood as an appropriately trained provider of career development services who is proficient in an identified set of competencies (Splette & Hoppin, 2000). More recently, the National Career Development Association (NCDA) of the United States has used the term career development facilitator to refer to a range of occupational titles and has established a global Career Development Facilitator training course based on 12 competencies (NCDA, 2013). Career development facilitators may hold a range of occupational titles but may not be trained career counsellors. Peavy (2004) suggested that the language and vocabulary of counselling that was developed in the positivist era may be becoming obsolete. For example, in his SocioDynamic approach he used the metaphor of “help-seeker” rather than “client”, and “bricoleur” to describe career counsellors’ capacity to apply creative solutions to problems. While we accept that there may be no single answer, the issue of terminology in our profession continues to be raised and warrants further discussion.

Language forms the basis of career counselling interactions. Because of our unique experiences, we can never know with any certainty that we understand what another person means. “Meaning is arrived at through negotiation within a specific context, for example the therapeutic context” (Berg & de Shazer, 1993, p. 7). Throughout career counselling, language and discourse is used to arrive at new meanings, which in turn lead to change. Savickas (2011a) believes that language both constructs and constitutes social realities. Words enable individuals to think and make meaning of their experience. Through language, individuals construct self (Savickas, 2011a, c). For example, individuals may ascribe a certain meaning to their behaviour, and through the counselling discourse, a new meaning or multiple meanings may be constructed which enables them to view themselves differently, and in turn act differently. New meanings bring about change, and thus it is through language that change occurs (Berg & de Shazer, 1993) and self is constructed. Self is “culturally shaped, socially constituted, and narrated by language” (Savickas, 2011a, p. 17). Thus the life narratives of individuals represent their own reality. It is on these life narratives that counselling is based. Typically a counselling relationship becomes a therapeutic conversation, where the counsellor

and the client join as co-constructors of a new reality. Thus greater emphasis is placed on local narratives (the stories told by individuals) than on grand narratives or objective universal truths. It is no longer possible, if it ever was, to “apply one grand narrative to everyone” (Savickas, 1993, p. 211).

### *The Narrative Approach*

The growing influence of constructivism and its associated emphasis on language is integral to what has been described as a “narrative turn” (Hartung, 2013a, p. 30) in career theory and career counselling. Stories or narratives are unique derivatives of systems theory thinking and are key to constructivist approaches. Narratives are socially and contextually constructed and reflect an individual’s history, culture, society, relationships and language (Collin & Young, 1992; McAdams, 2006). Narratives represent a mechanism for human knowing; individuals “construct their identities from the symbols or meanings on offer within their culture” (McLeod, 1996, p. 178). In essence, individuals live narrative lives (Chen, 1998, 2002; Hartung, 2013a; Savickas, 2011a, b) and may be regarded as the main actors and characters in the stories they are living out (Christensen & Johnston, 2003). Narratives are a natural form of meaning-making and a mechanism through which individuals make sense of their everyday lives by articulating their stories (Chen, 2011), a process they engage with from childhood (Grant & Johnston, 2006). Indeed Savickas (2011a) explained that stories “serve as the construction tools for building narrative identity and highlighting career themes in complex social interactions” (p. 38). Thus in practice, career counsellors work with clients to construct future stories; “personal narrative describes the road to the present and points the way to the future” (Josselson, 1995, p. 35). A fundamental belief of narrative career counselling is that clients may “transform themselves by changing their life stories (Goncalves, Matos, & Santos, 2009, p. 1).

Giving clients an opportunity to tell their stories is a “starting point” in career counselling (Amundson, 2003a, 2009). Peavy (1997) reminded us of the privilege of hearing client stories and our role in “joining the storytellers in the task of re-authoring them toward more preferred futures” (p. 30). Gysbers, Heppner, and Johnston (1998) described career development as “the drama of the ordinary” because it is unfolding and evolving every day” (p. 12), and suggested that because of its “ordinariness”, individuals may lose sight of its dynamic nature and impact on their lives. Thus career counsellors try to encourage clients to tell stories from many facets of their lives in order to gain a comprehensive picture and also to understand the place of work in people’s lives (Richardson, 1993, 1996, 2000). Stories enable life career themes to be identified and analysed (Gysbers et al., 2003; McIlveen, 2011; Patton & McMahon, 2006a; Savickas, 2011a, 2013a), and the meaning ascribed to interwoven parts of clients’ lives, and their subjective careers to be uncovered. Themes and patterns may assist individuals to connect previously disconnected events and chapters of their lives and in so doing make meaning that assists in the design of their future stories. Individuals may live their lives without noticing the themes that run through their stories (Gibson, 2004) and



thus themes may assist them to “look at old facts in new ways” (Rogers, 1942, p. 77). This process enables future stories to be scaffolded in the stories of the past (M. White, 2007) and consequently, clients may believe that they are achievable (M. M. Gergen & K. J. Gergen, 2006). To this end Savickas (1993) suggested that

acting as co-authors and editors ... counsellors can help clients:

1. authorize their careers by narrating a coherent, continuous, and credible story,
  2. invest career with meaning by identifying themes and tensions in the story line, and
  3. learn the skills needed to perform the next episode in the story.
- (pp. 210-213)

The lives of individuals are multistoried as no story is capable of encompassing all of life (A. Morgan, 2000). For example, individuals choose the stories they tell us, most usually their dominant story. However, there are also stories they don't tell us, stories that they don't know or realise, stories that they have forgotten, and stories that have been silenced (McMahon, 2006c). For example, stories of workplace harassment or work related stress may not have been told by individuals either because they have no-one to tell, are embarrassed to tell, or have been prevented from telling by someone, possibly by someone in authority. Further, individuals may relate stories they commonly tell, their dominant stories, stories told by others in their system of influence, stories they have long forgotten, stories they have never told, stories they have been afraid to tell, and stories they did not know they could tell (McMahon). Individuals may also tell stories that are repetitive, life-denying or subservient (McLeod, 1996). The process of moving from present stories to future stories may be viewed as a dialogical process (Peavy, 1997) or as a “conversational partnership” (M. White, 2007, p. 263) based on open communication. Stories provide clues to the themes and patterns of an individual's life story and the meaning they make of their life. Thus career counselling becomes a dialogue of coconstructing new meaning and/or writing new chapters or stories. In essence, career counsellors take a “self-as-narrative” view of clients rather than a “self-as-trait” view (Peavy, 1995, p. 2) and engage as co-authors with the storytellers in “negotiating stories that must take into account both the individual's life and the ecological context” (Bujold, 2004, p. 480).

The process of re-authoring stories is an important element of the career counselling process as “good counselling helps clients develop the skills necessary to continually grow in and out of stories” (C. Campbell & Ungar, 2004b, p. 37). Similarly Gibson (2004) suggested that as narratives are told and retold, authored and re-authored, individuals are able to reflectively examine what they are doing and what they are becoming. Decision-making is based on individuals' understanding who they are in terms of meaning rather than in terms of category, role or occupation (Gibson). As in most other forms of counselling, career counsellors use the counselling microskills, for example empathic reflection, interventions such as psychodramatic enactments, and the use of metaphor. Above all, a quality relationship is essential.

*Assessment*

Assessment has been a defining feature of career counselling since the days of Parsons (1909) and continues to distinguish it from personal counselling. As discussed in chapter 2, career assessment grew out of the psychology of individual differences. Constructivism challenges career counsellors to examine the type and place of career assessment in their counselling (McMahon & Patton, 2002a; McMahon & M. Watson, 2012b). The dominant form of assessment is still quantitative assessment which is informed by the positivist worldview, and to date little attention has been focused on qualitative career assessment which is more philosophically consistent with constructivist approaches to career counselling. There is evidence of some change. For example, in 2005 a special issue of the *Journal of Career Assessment* focused on qualitative career assessment (Walsh, 2005) was published. Moreover, a number of qualitative career assessment processes have been described in the literature (e.g., Career Story Interview [Savickas, 2011a]; Career Cycles [Zikic & Franklin, 2010]; Genograms [Di Fabio, 2010]; My Career Chapter [McIlveen, 2011; McIlveen & Patton, 2010]; My System of Career Influences [McMahon, M. Watson & Patton, 2005]. Moreover, Rehfuss (2009) proposed the future career autobiography as a narrative measure of career intervention effectiveness that has subsequently been used in research (e.g., Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012). Despite these examples of qualitative career assessment, McMahon (2008) questioned whether qualitative career assessment would have a higher profile in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Constructivist approaches and their influence on the use of assessment may break down what has traditionally been a barrier between the merging of the two forms of counselling. In addition, constructivism suggests different ways of incorporating quantitative career assessment into the counselling process (McMahon & Patton, 2002a, c). Specifically, quantitative assessment may be incorporated into qualitative, constructivist career counselling processes (McMahon & M. Watson, 2012b; M. Watson & McMahon, 2013, 2014). This qualitative process is depicted in [Figure 13.1](#). The career counsellor enters the client's life space and develops a collaborative relationship in order that the clients may tell their career story, explore meaning, and co-construct new meaning in order that the next chapter of their career story can be written and demonstrated through their career action. Whereas assessment was fundamental to traditional linear career counselling processes, this may not be so under the constructivist worldview. For example, the co-construction of meaning may itself be sufficient for clients to move toward the next chapter of their career story. Further, clients may have already been engaged in assessment such as developing awareness of dissatisfaction with their present occupation or engaging in self-assessment through commercially available or web-based assessment tools. Where further assessment is desirable, it is mutually discussed and agreed to by the career counsellor and client. The assessment chosen may be qualitative or quantitative. However, it is their incorporation into the counselling process that is different from the traditional approach (see McMahon & M. Watson, 2012b; M. Watson & McMahon, 2013,

2014). In particular, clients have a greater role to play in the interpretation of results in order that meaning and understanding is elicited. Traditionally the outcome of career counselling may have been scores and fit (Savickas, 1993). While these may still be outcomes of the suggested process, their incorporation into the process of meaning making will enable them to be invested with greater meaning.

#### Starting point

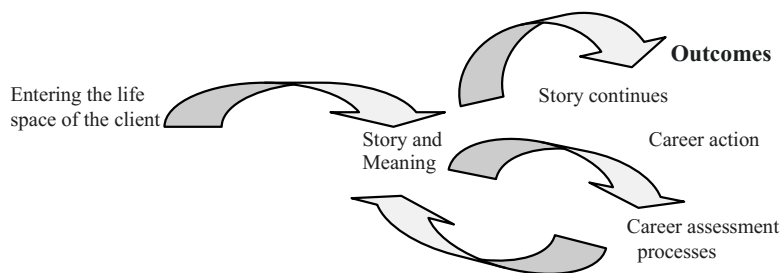


Figure 13.1 A new location for career assessment

The purpose of this discussion is not to advocate one form of assessment over another, but rather to suggest that it is the purpose of the assessment and the way in which it is incorporated and used in career counselling that determines whether the approach is constructivist. For example, de Bruin and de Bruin (2006) distinguish between testing and assessment. They describe testing as a process of administering, scoring and collating tests whereas they view assessment as a more holistic process that gives meaning to information whether or not it is psychometric. Thus testing gathers psychometric data that can then be incorporated into a qualitative career assessment process. M. Watson, Duarte and Glavin (2005) contend that career assessment should be psychosocial and consider the broader contextual factors that may influence individuals. Thus, as reflected by these authors quantitative career assessment and qualitative career assessment may be used in complementary processes and there is no need for an “unnecessary divorce” between the two (Sampson, 2009, p. 91). Exploring possibilities for the co-existence of quantitative and qualitative career assessment has been advocated and demonstrated through the Integrative Structured Interview process (McMahon & M. Watson, 2012b) which integrates the quantitative Self-Directed Search (Holland, 1985c) into a qualitative narrative interview process.

Thus users of assessment tools are called on to question their own assumptions behind the processes and methods that they use (Parker, 2006). Parker suggested that even the most common qualitative assessment tools, card sorts, may be used in a traditional classification-based approach if they are used only to predict client suitability for certain kinds of work or activity. Thus it is not the assessment tool as such but rather the process in which the use of the tool is embedded such as the

context in which cards are sorted, the instructions given and the relationship between the client and the counsellor that differentiate between usage.

With the postmodern shift from objectivity to subjectivity or from scores to stories (Savickas, 1993), career counselling relationships are being defined differently and career counsellors are being encouraged to make increasing use of qualitative assessment (McMahon, 2008; McMahon & Patton, 2002a, b, c) especially in countries and cultures outside the original western bases of quantitative career assessment (M. Watson & McMahon, 2013). Qualitative assessment is bounded by less rigid parameters than quantitative assessment in that it may not be guided by a standardised set of directions and there is little, if any scoring, and where scoring is featured, it is generally subjective (Isaacson & D. Brown, 1993). Qualitative assessment is more informal (Okocha, 1998) and offers career counsellors “methods of helping clients to know and understand themselves better – methods that are flexible, open-ended, holistic, and nonstatistical” (Goldman, 1992, p. 616). Indeed, Goldman (1994) suggested that most career counsellors could make better use of qualitative assessment as many are not well qualified in quantitative assessment. The informality and flexibility of qualitative career assessment should not however, be mistaken for a lack of rigour in their design and development. For example, McMahon et al. (2005) described a rigorous and methodical process of developing the My Systems of Career Influences qualitative career assessment process and Rehfuß (2009) described the trialling of the future career autobiography.

In essence, qualitative assessment is intended to encourage individuals to tell their own career stories (F. H. Borgen, 1995), and uncover their subjective careers. The subjective component has traditionally been overlooked in career counselling, and Savickas (1992) suggested that the distinction between personal and career counselling will be reduced by adding the subjective component through the use of qualitative assessment. In addition, he claimed that qualitative assessment “emphasizes the counseling relationship rather than the delivery of the service” (p. 337). Goldman (1990, 1992) lists the characteristics of qualitative assessment as follows:

1. clients play an active role rather than that of a “passive responder” (1990, p. 205);
2. qualitative assessment is more integrative and holistic;
3. qualitative methods emphasise learning about oneself within a developmental framework;
4. qualitative assessment methods work well in groups;
5. qualitative assessment reduces the distinction between counselling and assessment;
6. qualitative assessment is valuable for relating to individuals of “different cultural and ethnic groups, socioeconomic levels, sexual identities, and to people with disabilities”. (1990, p. 206)

Qualitative assessment processes include autobiographies (Rehfuß, 2009), early recollections (Savickas, 2011a), structured interviews (McIlveen et al., 2005;

McIlveen et al., 2003; McMahon & M. Watson, 2012b), card sorts (Parker, 2006; Gysbers et al., 2003), timelines or life lines (McMahon & Patton, 2003b), genograms (Di Fabio, 2010) and their derivative career-o-grams (Thorngren & Feit, 2001), lifespace maps (Peavy, 1997) and a Pattern Identification Exercise (Amundson, 2009). Goldman (1992) suggested that counsellors can develop their own qualitative assessment instruments. Illustrative of Goldman's suggestion is the development of the Systems Theory Framework presented in chapter 9 as a qualitative career assessment tool, the My System of Career Influences (MSCI) (McMahon et al., 2005a, b; McMahon et al., 2013a, b). The MSCI will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Traditionally there has been little to guide career counsellors in the development or use of qualitative career assessment. McMahon, Patton and M. Watson (2003) suggested the following criteria for developers of qualitative career assessment processes:

- Ground the assessment process in theory;
- Test the career assessment process;
- Ensure that the process may be completed in a reasonable time frame;
- Design a process that fosters holism;
- Write the instructions for the client;
- Write readable and easily understood instructions;
- Sequence the process in logical, simple, small, achievable steps;
- Provide a structure that facilitates both a sense of direction and enough flexibility to cater for individuality;
- Structure processes that encourage the co-operative involvement of both counsellor and client; and
- Include a debriefing process to elicit new learning and meaning.

McMahon and Patton (2002b) proposed guidelines for career counsellors wishing to incorporate greater use of qualitative assessment into their work with clients, specifically:

- Individualise the process for the client;
- Map the qualitative assessment onto the story previously told by the client;
- Make the qualitative assessment fit for the client not the client fit the assessment;
- Broach the subject of using a qualitative assessment device tentatively, respectfully, and informatively;
- Acknowledge that it is the client's prerogative to engage in the activity;
- Work with and support the client through the process of the assessment using counselling skills;
- Debrief/process the activity;
- Invite feedback on qualitative assessment processes; and
- Be creative.

Brott (2004) described the use of qualitative assessment processes within her storied approach to constructivist career counselling (Brott, 2001) through the three interwoven processes of co-construction, deconstruction, and construction.

Similarly, Savickas (2011a) described his career counselling process that includes the Career Story Interview.

It is not suggested here that one form of assessment is better than another. However the emphasis has been on qualitative assessment because of its theoretical alignment with constructivist approaches to career counselling. All forms of assessment may be used to assist clients to elaborate patterns of meaning when they are incorporated into constructivist career counselling approaches. Indeed Perry (2010) advocates “using the best of both worlds” and emphasises that it “not a question of one or the other” (p. 11).

#### THE SYSTEMS THEORY FRAMEWORK AND CAREER COUNSELLING

The Systems Theory Framework provides a map for career counselling (McMahon & Patton, 2006c) as it accommodates not only the perspectives of the traditional predictive theories, but also the positions of the constructivist approaches to career counselling. A further strength of the STF is the link it forges between theory and practice. The use of the STF for understanding career development has implications for the practice of career counselling. As evidenced by the discussion in this chapter, the use of a systems theory perspective requires career counsellors to understand theory and practice from the perspectives of both the logical positivist and the constructivist worldviews. In moving to apply constructivist approaches in career counselling, Bratcher (1982), one of the first to apply systems theory to career counselling, commented that career counsellors will be expected to combine some of the directive approaches of the past with the ability to think in circular rather than linear terms (as discussed in chapter 8). The notion of circular feedback processes shaping and reshaping systems through subtle feedback is common in some fields of counselling, yet comparatively new in the field of career development. The STF is informing the development of a story telling approach to career counselling (McMahon, 2005a, 2006c, 2009; McMahon & M. Watson, 2012a, 2013). This section of the chapter considers career counselling from a systems theory perspective through the lens of the STF. First, it conceptualises career counselling as a therapeutic system. Second, it discusses the STF and the process of career counselling, in particular the story telling approach that is based on the STF. Third, culture and career counselling will be considered and finally career assessment will be described from an STF perspective with particular emphasis given to the My System of Career Influences (McMahon et al., 2005a, b; McMahon et al., 2013a, b) qualitative career assessment process.

##### *The Therapeutic System*

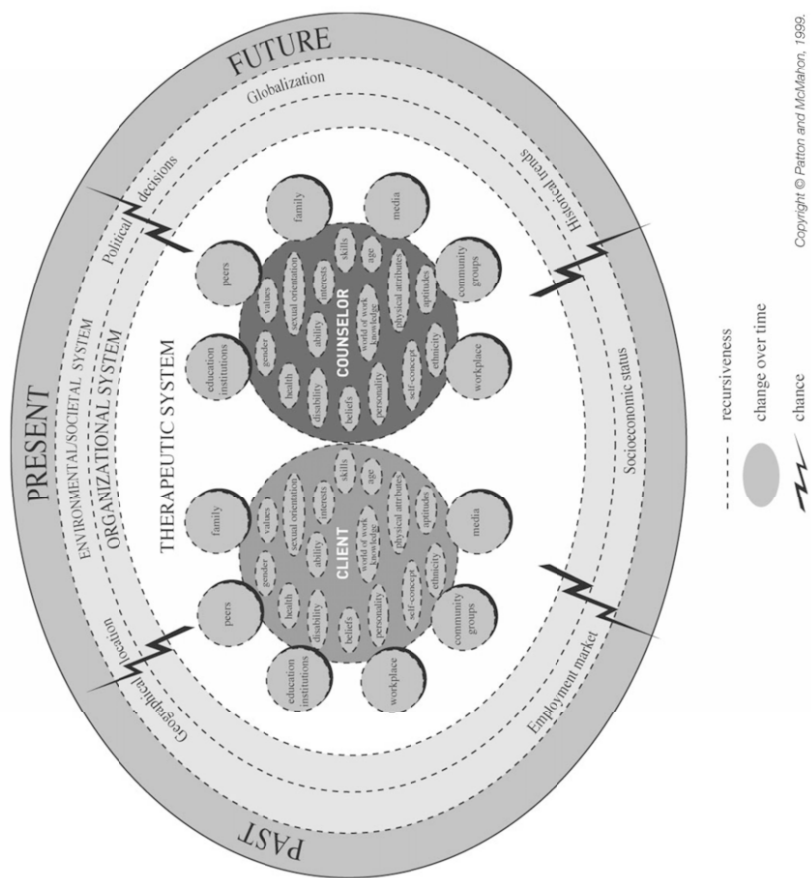
It is evident from the discussion in this chapter and the nature of the interaction between the client and the career counsellor that the counselling relationship itself can be conceptualised as a system in its own right. In fact, the system of influences of the client meets with the system of influences of the career counsellor. In this meeting of two systems of influence, career counsellors become an element of the

system of influences on the career development of the individual, and the individual becomes an element of the system of influences of the career counsellor.

In this system of interaction, the career counsellor and the individual use language to coconstruct meaning and career stories from which narratives of their preferred future career stories emerge and are enacted. Language has a central role to play in the career counselling profession, described by Herr (1997) as a verbal profession. In counselling, the term therapy is often used to refer to the constructivist approaches. In fact, the term ‘family therapy’ was coined to describe the discipline which first recognised the use of systems theory in counselling. Peavy (1996) suggested that the terms counselling and therapy refer to the “same process of personal reality construction and reconstruction” (p. 142), and that both centre on meaning with language as the medium. Thus it is this conceptualisation that has informed the selection of the title for this chapter, ‘therapeutic systems’. The therapeutic system we have conceptualised is illustrated in [Figure 13.2](#). It portrays the potential complexity of career counselling and its place in the social and environmental-societal systems of both the career counsellor and the client.

As depicted in [Figure 13.2](#) career counsellors exist within their own ever-changing systems of influences; so too do clients. Career counselling constitutes the meeting of two separate systems and the formation of a new system, the therapeutic system. The boundaries of each system must be permeable enough to allow a relationship to develop and dialogue and meaning making to occur, yet impermeable enough for both parties to maintain their individuality. Thus the boundary between the counsellor system and the client system needs to be maintained. However, as the relationship between members of the therapeutic system develops, the boundary between the client system and the counsellor system may become less clear. Possible risks associated with unclear boundaries in counselling include counsellors imposing their own values on clients or manipulating them, or alternatively counsellors being manipulated by clients. Thus career counsellors need a clear understanding of their own narratives that have been formed through interaction with their own system of influences, past, present, and future. They also need to facilitate exploration of the client’s life narratives including the meaning of career and work in their lives. Thus the creation of meaning through dialogue is illustrative of how the therapeutic system may also be regarded as a learning system.

Career counselling takes place within a therapeutic setting, for example an organisation such as a school or business, or a private counselling office. Organisational systems should not be overlooked because they may influence the type of clients counselled, for example rehabilitation clients, unemployed people, school students, the cost of the service, record-keeping and the nature of the service provided. In fact, it could define the therapeutic relationship. For example, all clients could be ‘processed’ in a similar way. In addition, the setting may affect the level of professional support available to counsellors, for example supervision, a subject discussed more in chapter 11.



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Figure 13.2 The therapeutic system



At a broader level, career counselling takes place within the environmental-societal system. In this regard, Amundson, W. A. Borgen, Iaquinta, Butterfield and Koert (2010) concluded that the STF offers a suitable conceptualisation for economic, historical, employment market and political influences on individuals' career development. As previously discussed, career counselling is increasingly being seen by governments as essential to the future well-being of individuals and nations in the rapidly changing world. While this emphasis will raise the profile and expectations of career counsellors, it will also place demands on them to provide accountable practices with outcomes that reflect responsiveness to the needs of society. For example, the OECD review of career guidance in 37 countries revealed concerns about the training and qualifications of career practitioners (OECD, 2004), and the issue of professional standards is high on the agenda of career practitioners in countries such as Australia (Career Industry Council of Australia, 2011; McMahon, 2004b) and Canada (National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards, 2004; discussed in chapter 11). Indeed, the development of the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners was government funded and career industry managed.

Influences at the environmental-societal level may affect government funding for certain programs or clients, for example managed care, and the availability of career services in remote or rural areas. In addition there is a move toward fee based counselling services which challenges career counsellors to provide a more diverse range of services than traditional one to one counselling. A pressing issue that has been driven by the environmental-societal system, particularly policy makers is the need for accountability and an evidence base (see chapter 10). Thus it is imperative that career counsellors set their practice into the broad environmental-societal system. Awareness of the needs and trends of this system will ensure the compatibility of career counselling services for the career development needs of the citizens and society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For example, there is evidence of a shift from traditional reactive or remedial service provision to certain groups such as school leavers and the unemployed, to a more proactive and comprehensive service provision through the concept of lifelong guidance for all citizens (as discussed in chapter 10).

One of the most significant trends, which is not only influencing the environmental-societal system, but also influencing the social and individual systems, and the provision of career development services in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the rapid expansion of technology. Moreover, greater integration of technology into career practice is being mediated by changes in the public, private and community sectors (Bimrose, D. Hughes, & Barnes, 2011). Bimrose et al., propose that the integration of technology into careers practice ranges along a continuum from high levels of integration to low levels and similarly, that the skill levels of practitioners ranges on a continuum from highly skilled to low skilled. A number of authors have acknowledged the transformative role of technology in career information and guidance practice (e.g., Bimrose, Barnes, & Atwell, 2011; Bimrose, D. Hughes, & Barnes, 2011; Harris-Bowlsbey & Sampson, 2005; Hooley, Hutchinson, & Watts, 2010a, b; Kettunen, Vuorinen, & Sampson, 2013; OECD, 2004; O'Halloran, Fahr,

& Keller, 2002; Osborn, Dikel, & Sampson, 2011; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013; Vuorinen, Sampson, & Kettunen, 2011; Watts, 2002). Kettunen et al. (2013) found that career practitioners' conceptions of the use of social media ranged from unnecessary to indispensable. Moreover they found that practitioners who were more directive in their approach were more likely to view social media as unnecessary whereas those who were more holistic in their approach were more likely to view social media as indispensable. They concluded that career practitioners require training that both develops their skills and challenges their conceptions. Viljamaa, Patton, and McMahon (2006) have suggested that technology presents challenges of quality and quantity to career practitioners. The need to develop the skills of career practitioners and understanding of new technologies and social media should be integrated into initial training and also into continuing professional development (Bimrose, D. Hughes, & Barnes, 2011; Kettunen et al., 2013). In terms of quantity, technology has the potential to significantly increase access to career guidance services particularly through its capacity to construct "self-service approaches". For example, the availability of occupational databases, career assessment programs and increasingly integrated computer assisted career counselling programs are common. As mentioned previously, the potential use of social media in career guidance has more recently been considered (Kettunen et al., 2013). However Grubb (2002) raised concerns that "more information is not necessarily better than less information if people have no idea how to use it" (p. 5). Watts (1996c) suggested that the challenge is "to utilize such technologies in ways which supplement and extend human potential rather than acting to restrict or replace it" (p. 269).

Thus in terms of quality, the issue turns more to a focus on the appropriate use of technology in career development services, an issue raised over a decade ago by Sampson et al. (1997) who discussed the possibilities and challenges of technology. It is therefore desirable for technology to be integrated into career development services (Bimrose, D. Hughes, & Barnes, 2011; Grubb, 2002; Hooley, Hutchinson, & Watts, 2010a, b; Kettunen et al., 2013; Sampson, Kolodinsky, & Greeno, 1997; Watts, 2002) where clients receive appropriate levels of support and where ethical and professional issues have been well considered (Harris-Bowlsbey & Sampson, 2005; O'Halloran, Fahr, & Keller, 2002; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013; Sampson, 2002; Sampson, Kolodinsky, & Greeno, 1997). While technology affords the promise of greater availability of web-based career information and career guidance, much more research is required to validate its effectiveness over time and cost considerations (Howieson & Semple, 2013; Viljamaa et al., 2006) and also the effectiveness of technology enhanced interventions compared with personal face-to-face facilitative counselling relationships (Harris-Bowlsbey, 2003).

Technology is located in the media social influence of the STF. It provides a relatively new and expanding system of social influence with which career development practitioners and also consumers may interact. Its influence may extend locally, nationally or globally, and as such provides an example of globalisation at work. It also provides a medium of dialogue not previously

available. In addition it provides new language and new information with which to construct life and career stories. For example, career narratives may now include stories about technology and unemployment, or technology and new opportunities. It forges links between the environmental-societal system, the individual, and career counsellors. For example, individuals in remote areas can now have access to career counselling services previously unavailable to them. Thus technology makes possible the creation of new therapeutic systems.

However career counsellors as a profession have an ethical responsibility to monitor the use of technology, anticipate problems, and ensure safeguards are in place to protect consumers. In addition, technology has implications for the training of those new to the profession, and updating the skills of practising professionals. The rapid pace of technological change mandates that lifelong learning is embraced and promoted by career counsellors. In addition, lifelong learning needs to encompass learning about technology. Despite the growth of online career counselling and other uses of technology, surprisingly little has been written and an evidence base is yet to emerge. Howieson and Semple (2013) investigated the use of career websites by young people and concluded that:

The guidance community and policy makers need to know much more about their use (or non-use) by different individuals, the extent to which they do benefit users' career management skills, the factors that contribute to their effectiveness and how they interact with other online resources and other types of CIAG [Career Information and Guidance] provision. Without such research CIAG policy will continue to be based on assumptions rather than evidence. (p. 299)

The rapid pace of technological development and globalisation and the corresponding emphasis on lifelong learning as described in chapter 10 reflects the recursive nature of the STF. Thus the emphasis in this section of the book on learning is highly relevant in the global economy.

In its relatively brief history, the STF has been applied to a range of cultural groups and settings (see Patton & McMahon, 1997), qualitative career assessment (McMahon, Patton & M. Watson, 2004, 2005a, b; McMahon, M. Watson, et al., 2008; McMahon, M. Watson & Patton, 2005, 2013a, b; McIlveen et al., 2003; McIlveen et al., 2005), career counselling (McMahon, 2005a; McMahon & Patton, 2006c; McMahon & M. Watson, 2010, 2012a, 2013; Patton & McMahon, 2006a, b), multicultural career counselling (N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005; McMahon, M. B. Watson, Chetty, & Hoelson, 2012a, b), and to career counsellor training (ACES/NCDA, 2000). In addition, its application across countries has been suggested (Patton, McMahon, & M. Watson, 2006; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2002). Thus, it has been demonstrated that the STF has much to offer career counselling.

The STF provides a powerful graphic through which career counselling may be viewed in relation to the individual, social, and environmental-societal systems of influence. While the counsellor/client relationship is critical, it is also important that career development facilitators understand the broader context in which their

work is located. Such understanding provides them with the opportunity to be strategic and responsive in the development and expansion of their services to meet the needs of individuals and society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### *The STF and the Process of Career Counselling*

Just as systems theory informs the way in which the therapeutic system is conceptualised, so too does it inform the counselling process. In particular, a story telling approach to career counselling is being developed using the foundation of the STF (McMahon, 2005a, 2006c, 2007a; McMahon & M. Watson, 2010, 2012a, 2013). Underpinning the story telling approach to career counselling are the constructs of the Systems Theory Framework presented in chapter 9 and the constructivist views presented earlier in this chapter related to the counselling relationship, the counselling process, language, the use of narrative and assessment. However, the STF also offers specific guidance for practitioners. At a practical level, the STF provides a map to guide career counsellors as they encourage clients to relate the details and reality of their own maps through the telling of their career stories (McMahon & Patton, 2003b, 2006c; McMahon, Patton, & M. Watson, 2004; McMahon & M. Watson, 2008b, 2013) and to explore the “complex web of relationships ... the complex interactions that take place, and so highlighting crucial influences and tensions” (Collin, 2006, p. 300) in the lives of clients. Together, counsellor and client gain insight into the interconnectedness of systemic influences on the client’s situation in an approach that is reflective of Savickas’ (1993) call for career counselling to become less expert dominated, less focused on fit, and more focused on stories than scores. Thus clients and counsellors engage in a process of coauthoring or coconstructing stories that are invested with meaning by identifying unifying themes in the lives of clients who learn what is required to construct the next episode or chapter of the story (McMahon & M. Watson, 2013; Savickas, 1993).

The STF emphasises the uniqueness and wholeness of clients and provides career counsellors with the opportunity to gain insight into their unique situations. Clients and their careers are constructed in social and cultural contexts that must be taken into account in career counselling. In relating their career stories, individuals are encouraged to elaborate their internalised culture (Ho, 1995). Although the individual is located at the centre of the system, N. Arthur and McMahon (2005) contended that the STF may be customised to accommodate individuals whose career development occurs either in collectivist or individualistic cultures and there is evidence that the STF’s story telling approach is able to do so (McMahon et al., 2012a, b). In applying the STF to career counselling, McMahon (2005a) suggested a number of conceptual understandings and practical considerations that may guide the work of career counsellors. McMahon (2003a, 2005a) also identified a number of practice dimensions related to the application of the STF to career counselling which have since been elaborated by McMahon and Patton (2006c).

Conceptual understandings drawn from the STF provide a theoretical base for counsellors and include the individual, systemic thinking, story and recursiveness.

Importantly, individuals are considered as experts in their own lives who are the principal designers of their careers which they seek to make sense of through the telling of stories (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). L. Cochran (2007) describes storytelling as a “human universal” (p. 18). As people tell stories, they make meaning of their experiences which has an effect of shaping their lives and also of constructing identity (La Pointe, 2010; McAdams, 2011). In career counselling, storytelling assists individuals to construct their future identities. Systemic thinking enables individuals, including career counsellors, to think in non-linear ways which enables them to deal with the complexities and unpredictability of work in life (Ryan & Tomlin, 2010). Indeed, life is multistoried (A. Morgan, 2000). On the surface, stories may appear discrete and unrelated; however systemic thinking encourages counsellors and clients to take a holistic view by locating the individual within the context of their whole system of influences. Through story the recursiveness and connection between the influences of the system and the patterns and themes in and between stories may be uncovered. Recursiveness, or the interaction between elements of the system, necessarily means that the system is dynamic. Enacted in career counselling through systemic thinking, recursiveness, enables individuals to synthesise and see relationships between material that may on the surface seem disparate (Ryan & Tomlin, 2010).

Practical considerations relate to establishing a fruitful and meaningful counselling interaction and include facilitating connectedness, the use of story and the nature of the counselling relationship. Connectedness is a multileveled concept illustrated through the STF and essential for effective career counselling. Indeed connectedness is fundamental to the formation of a collaborative and fruitful counselling relationship. At a fundamental level connectedness exists between counsellors and their own systems of influence, clients and counsellors in the counselling relationship, and clients and their own systems of influence. The narration of career stories fosters connectedness between individuals and the elements in their systems of influence as well as connectedness between elements of the systems. The task in career counselling is not so much to understand the elements of the system in detail, but rather to co-construct story and meaning around the system as a whole through elaboration of the recursiveness between the elements of the system of influence. In this way career counsellors are encouraged to take a “self-as-narrative” view of clients rather than a “self-as-traits” view and in so doing, patterns and life-themes may be identified. To encourage clients to tell stories, McMahon and M. Watson (2012a) propose that three levels of questions may be asked of clients. Level 1 questions focus on eliciting information and facts. Level two questions focus on connectedness, recursiveness and the client’s subjective experience. Level three questions focus on identifying the themes and patterns in stories which enhances clients’ self-understanding. In order that the telling of stories may be encouraged, it is important for career counsellors to facilitate relationships where a mattering climate is created (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989), a climate where clients feel valued, cared about and appreciated, and that they really matter. As Amundson (2009) suggested, Rogers’ (1951) necessary conditions for counselling, genuineness, unconditional positive

regard, and empathic understanding are essential for such a climate. Curiosity and deep listening are core concepts of the story telling approach to career counselling (McMahon & M. Watson, 2012a). Deep listening in counselling is different from social listening and necessitates an intense focus on the client and the counselling relationship (Lee & Prior, 2013). Through deep listening and curiosity, career counsellors may identify clues from client stories that they may ask about or reflect on which in turn, sends a message to clients that they are being listened to. Savickas (2011a) suggests that “getting absorbed in a client’s story helps them to relax” (p. 44). Thus, career counselling informed by the STF, in particular, the story telling approach, is an approach to narrative career counselling. Six strategies have been proposed that narrative career counsellors could adopt in their practice, specifically:

1. providing a space for reflection;
2. listening deeply for clues in client stories;
3. using the clues to construct brief responses or invitations to tell further stories;
4. assisting clients to identify and make explicit themes and patterns in their stories;
5. connecting previously disconnected stories through the identification of themes and patterns; and
6. incorporating themes and patterns as ‘ingredients’ of future stories. (McMahon, et al., 2012a, p. 138)

Because of their location in context and within relationships, stories are “major levers for human change” (M. M. Gergen & K. J. Gergen, 2006, p. 119).

Practice dimensions emanate from the theoretical understandings and the practical considerations, and relate specifically to the task of career counselling through the lens of the STF. The key recursive practice dimensions of career counselling that become the primary tasks of career counsellors include connectedness, reflection, meaning-making, learning and agency (McMahon, 2003b; McMahon & Patton, 2006c). These dimensions are consistent with the three main tasks of a counsellor identified by Peavy (1997) and described earlier in this chapter. Each one will now be discussed in detail.

### *Connectedness*

Connectedness is an intricate and multidimensional construct (Townsend & McWhirter, 2005) that occurs on many levels within individuals’ lives and within the career counselling process. Connectedness is best described through terms such as relatedness belongingness, attachment and affiliation (Mkhize, 2011). Career development and career counselling have through their history been focused on individuals. The STF however, takes an individual in context view and thus emphasises connectedness with family, community and other people. Connectedness is clearly illustrated in the STF and the therapeutic system through the dynamic process of recursiveness within and between systems. In practical

terms, connectedness may be enhanced if career counsellors connect with their own career stories, connect with clients in the client counsellor relationship, and also connect clients with their systems of influence.

#### *Career Counsellors Connecting with their own Career Stories*

Career counsellors who connect with their own career stories are better able to understand their own history, values, biases, beliefs and prejudices, and the socio-political system in which they live and work. Exercises such as that detailed later in this chapter may enhance career counsellors' awareness of their personal career stories. Such awareness may assist career counsellors to more appropriately respond to the needs of a diverse client group and also to be alert to situations where they could potentially impose elements of their own career story onto the counselling process. Moreover, during the career counselling process, Savickas (2011a) advocates that career counsellors attend to their own feelings and emotions while listening to client stories. In addition to connecting with their own career stories, career counsellors connect with a body of theoretical knowledge and practical skills that inform their work. Understanding the cultural applicability and appropriateness of this knowledge and skill may also assist career counsellors be responsive to the needs of a diverse client group.

#### *Career Counsellors Connecting with Clients*

Career counsellors connect with their clients in the relationship dimension of career counselling. As reflected in the therapeutic system (see [Figure 13.2](#)) career counsellors enter the lifespace of another individual for the purpose of career counselling. The relationship dimension is not a new concept for career counsellors working within the constructivist paradigm and has been discussed more fully earlier in this chapter. Supportive relationships help people to articulate their experience, interpret their needs and shape their lives out of a range of possibilities (Amundson, 2009; McMahon et al., 2012a, b; Savickas, 1993, 2011a). At a fundamental level, connecting with clients involves meeting and greeting. However, connecting with clients should not be viewed as a process or step that occurs during the first few minutes of the counselling relationship. Rather it is a recursive process through which the counselling relationship deepens and strengthens over time. It is a relationship where clients are viewed as experts in their lives, and where the curiosity of the career counsellor encourages clients to tell their stories. In addition, connecting with clients is a multi-sensory process that also involves the cognitive and affective domains.

#### *Connecting Clients with Their Systems of Influence*

Connecting clients with their own system of influences is critical to the career counselling process. Ryan and Tomlin (2010) claim that individuals "need the ability to understand complex systems and use thinking skills to see patterns that

have an impact on both business organizations and their job opportunities” (p. 85). It is through this process that stories are remembered and told, and it is through the telling of stories that connectedness between the systemic influences is recognised. Themes and patterns in individuals’ life stories are also illustrative of the process of connectedness. In terms of connecting with client stories, it is important for career counsellors to engage with clients at an appropriate level or to “start where the client is”. L. Cochran (1997) suggested that clarifying the career issue or the gap between what is, “the existing state of affairs”, and what ought/could/should be, “the desired state of affairs” (p. 16), is important in connecting with the client. Further, clarification of what is desirable (what the client wants from us) and what is possible (what we can offer) is also important. It should be remembered that a client’s “existing state of affairs” and “desired state of affairs” are not static and may change over time as a result of the recursive process with elements of his/her system of influences and also with the career counsellor. With the STF as a map (McMahon & Patton, 2006c) that may guide the possible content of career counselling, clients may be encouraged to tell stories from their past, from their leisure activities, or from their community service (McMahon & M. Watson, 2012a). It is not uncommon for clients to compartmentalise their lives and to not recognise the themes and patterns that permeate their lives. Thus counselling may be viewed as a collaborative process in which career counsellors help clients to tell their story and to identify themes that flow through it, and in so doing co-construct a future story (McMahon & M. Watson, 2012a; Savickas, 1993).

### *Reflection*

Peavy (1997) suggested that career counsellors model a process that creates care, hope, encouragement, clarification and activation. In so doing, they model a respectful, curious, tentative, and non-expert approach that encourages clients to be “explorers in their own life” (p. 20). Such an approach creates a space for reflection whereby individuals feel safe to narrate their stories, where they are encouraged to elicit meaning, and where they are supported in the co-construction of new or alternate stories. In a reflective environment, individuals are better able to make sense of the world of work through subjective interpretation of their own career experience. Reid and Bassot (2011) contend that “providing a transitional space within career counselling that is safe” (p. 113) facilitates reflective career thinking that enables clients to explore and construct future possibilities. In living through the complexity of economic life, they “draw new insights and formulate new strategies that make sense of this complexity” (Amundson et al., 2002, p. 27).

### *Meaning-making*

Creating a space for reflection produces an environment whereby

both speaker and listener enter an open communication interchange. What comes to be understood (shared meaning) is the result of negotiation. The two



interpreters arrive at a fusion of understanding that takes the form of an agreement, understanding or shared knowledge. (Peavy, 2000, p. 8)

Meaning refers to an individual's subjective views in perceiving and explaining contextual events (Chen, 1998, 2002). Chen (2011) claims that meaning making "plays a central role in all aspects of our lives" (p. 39). Career counsellors facilitate a process where stories are elaborated, new meaning is invited or constructed, and possibilities for the future elicited. Meaning making may be enhanced by processes such as awareness, insight, sense making, understanding, and interpretation to (McMahon et al., 2012a). A. Morgan (2000) suggested that clients may relate "thin descriptions" (p. 12) of their circumstances which produce "thin conclusions" (p. 12) that may sustain problems and limit possibilities for the future. Therefore career counsellors work with clients to explore alternative stories that might enhance the possibility of change. A. Morgan suggested that the key question for counsellors is "how can we assist people to break from thin conclusions and to re-author new and preferred stories for their lives and relationships?" (p. 15). The importance of meaning making to career counselling was highlighted by Young and Valach (2004) who reminded us that "meaning is not just in our minds as a representation but in our action and careers as an on-going process of construction" (p. 512). Thus the process of meaning-making cannot be underestimated.

### *Learning*

Meaning-making may be viewed as an important element of learning the process whereby individuals construct and transform experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, and emotions (Holmes, 2002). As discussed in detail in chapter 10, learning has long held a place in career theory (e.g., Super, 1990) and more recently its importance to active lifecareer management has been recognised (e.g., McMahon, Patton & Tatham, 2003). The importance of learning in career development has more recently been emphasised in models of career development such as the constructivist career learning and development model (Bassot, 2012) and the career and learning transitional model (Cameron, 2009) which reflects the STF. Through the process of career counselling individuals come to recognise or learn what is required for them to move towards their preferred future. Thus, career counselling may be viewed as a process of lifelong learning where stories of ability, strength, competence, hope, and encouragement are co-constructed that may facilitate transition to the "desired state of affairs" (L. Cochran, 1997, p. 16). Learning is facilitated through connectedness, reflection and meaning-making, and it is through learning that agency is fostered. Patton and McMahon (1999, 2006a) point out that learning may be intentional and unintentional and Meijers and Lengelle (2012) claim that individuals do not necessarily learn from experience themselves. Thus, career counselling has a role to play in assisting individuals make sense of their experiences and intentionally learn in order to construct a future story. The story telling approach (McMahon, 2007a, 2009; McMahon & M.

Watson, 2012a) makes learning an explicit component of the career counselling process.

### *Agency*

Agency refers to an individual's capacity to "act for themselves and speak on their own behalf" (Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997, p. 301). More simply, an agent may be viewed as "one who makes things happen" (L. Cochran, 1997, p. 3). Similarly, Young and Domene (2011) claim that agency is not only grounded in cognition but also in action. Career has also been conceptualised as individual agency (Chen, 1998). In terms of content in career counselling, fostering agency involves identifying and affirming clients' strengths, knowledge, attitudes, and skills that will be helpful in creating their preferred futures. In terms of process in career counselling, fostering agency involves affirming, supporting, encouraging, and creating an optimism around clients' capacity to create their preferred future. Peavy (1992) suggested that the career counselling process should be fruitful, that is "it should provide a re-construing or changed outlook on some aspect of life" (p. 221). Career counsellors working from the perspective of the STF believe in the capacity of the individuals with whom they work to actively design and construct preferred futures. Chen (2006) provided a detailed discussion of agency and its implications for career counselling. He suggested that career counsellors may promote human agency in relation to intentionality and action. He suggested that career counsellors attend to understanding, building, and reconstructing intentionality with clients. In relation to action, he suggested that career counsellors work with clients to increase action awareness, construct action plans, and implement action.

These practice dimensions previously discussed illustrate the possibilities offered by the STF to facilitate greater links between theory and practice. Each dimension may be accounted for theoretically, and each also describes tasks that may be undertaken by career counsellors. Thus the STF facilitates a theoretical and practical consistency. Further, these dimensions may also be used in the teaching of career counselling.

While much of this discussion has focused on one-on-one career counselling, systems theory also provides for interventions at levels of the system other than that of the individual, and raises the possibility of career counsellors being more proactive at this broader systems level. Career counsellors may intervene at the level of the individual system, the social system or the environmental-societal system. For example, counsellors may work with a family or an organisation in the belief that interventions anywhere in the system will interact with other elements of the system to bring about change (see example in chapter 14). Intervention at different levels of the individual's system of influences also suggests the possibility of career counsellors assuming additional roles. For example, Patton, McMahon and M. Watson (2006) considered the potential of parental involvement in order to assist a client. In this way, career counsellors may become advocates for clients with particular needs within an organisation, for example individuals of low

socioeconomic status or individuals of racial and ethnic origin. The systems theory construct of feedback loops is relevant here, as an intervention in one part of the system may result in better outcomes for the individual. N. Arthur and McMahon (2005) discussed these concepts in relation to multicultural career counselling and encouraged career counsellors to consider expanded roles such as those of advocate and coach.

A systems theory perspective will assist clients to construct new meanings of their circumstances. For example, it may be helpful for individuals to view their employment circumstances in terms of the social and economic climate of the nation. Career counselling may in the future begin to draw more on techniques and approaches from other counselling fields. In addition, Herr (1992) suggested that counselling may draw on psychoeducational models and structured learning processes. Thus a systems theory perspective has the capacity to forge links between career counselling and other disciplines.

#### THE STF, CULTURE AND CAREER COUNSELLING

Narratives are shaped through interaction with language and culture. It has been suggested that career counsellors shift their perspectives from monoculturalism to multiculturalism (Hartung, 2002; Leong & Hartung, 2000) consistent with perceptions of career counselling as a “discipline from the west” (Cheung, 2010). Client populations in career counselling are increasingly diverse, both in terms of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds and the nature of their concerns. Career counsellors also have diverse backgrounds. The diversity of career counsellors and clients has been stimulated by globalisation and as career counselling has become increasingly internationalised beyond its western countries of origin. Concerns have been expressed about the appropriateness of traditional career counselling approaches for diverse populations and have highlighted their emphasis on the individual and the notion of volition in making career choices (e.g., Blustein, 2006; Leung & Yuen, 2012; M. Watson, 2013). A systems theory perspective and constructivist approaches to career counselling facilitate reflection and enhanced understanding of diversity issues through engagement in dialogue centred on the client’s own narrative. In particular, career counselling informed by the STF takes an individual in context perspective that inherently seeks to understand the client’s cultural and contextual location (see McMahon, M. Watson, et al., 2008, 2013a, b; McMahon, M. Watson, & Patton, 2014; Patton et al., 2006). For example, Cameron (2009) has been influenced by the STF in developing her career and learning transitional model for those experiencing labour market disadvantage.

Narrative approaches and their emphasis on the quality of the counselling relationship resonate with trends in multicultural counselling. For example, Patterson (1996) described a return to recognizing counselling as an interpersonal relationship which recognises the uniqueness of the individual. Individuals belong to and interrelate with multiple groups, and the counsellor must be aware of the unique pattern of these influences in each client if counselling is to be successful. Indeed, Stead (2004) argued that “career counselling is cultural and not merely a

variable in the process” (p. 402). In this regard, culture infused counselling is based on the premise that culture needs to be located centrally in the principles and practices of counselling with all clients (N. Arthur & Collins, 2005, 2010; Collins & N. Arthur, 2010a, b). “Culture-infused counselling ... is the conscious and purposeful infusion of cultural awareness and sensitivity into all aspects of the counselling process and all other roles assumed by the counsellor ...” (N. Arthur & Collins, 2005, p. 16).

Locating culture centrally in all career counselling is advocated by us, as the STF depicts the social construction of culture within and by individuals through the recursive interaction with their systems of influences. Further, the STF provides a means of analysing the career counselling relationship, or therapeutic system, in which the interplay of cultural influences between counsellor and client is taken into consideration. Essentially, the counsellor and client create a new culture by coming together to exchange perspectives and create new meanings about career issues (N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005). The STF provides career counsellors with a framework for analysing the career counselling relationship and for incorporating cultural influences between counsellor and client into career counselling. Systemic thinking intrinsically considers context, encourages understanding of the subjective experience of clients, emphasizes strong, collaborative counsellor client relationships, and de-emphasizes expert driven processes (McMahon, M. Watson, & Patton, 2014). Moreover, it challenges a reductionist, single story, ‘parts in isolation’ approaches.

As the influence of globalisation creates a sense of “increased homogeneity and a world view representing the common humanity that binds all human beings together as one species” (Patterson, 1996, p. 230), it is imperative that career counsellors develop multicultural sensitivity and competence (Collins & N. Arthur, 2005a, b, 2010a, b) in order to avoid what Leong (1993) described as “culturally inappropriate” goals and process. For example, some cultures may be more oriented toward family or community than the individual, and in some cultures, for example the Chinese culture, the role and place of the counsellor may not be easy to define (Back, 1997; Leung & Yuen, 2012). Leong (1993) suggested approaching cross-cultural encounters without preconceived ideas about the individual or their culture, an approach which sits comfortably with the Systems Theory Framework and narrative approaches which enable meaning to be explored through language. Career counsellors need to be reflective about their personal culture and how socialised beliefs and values influence their professional behaviours and interactions with clients (N. Arthur & McMahon, 2005). In this regard, Collins and N. Arthur (2005a) advocated that counsellors incorporate cultural auditing as an ongoing process in their concept of culture-infused counselling, the My Career Chapter process could enable career counsellors to reflect on their own culture (McIlveen, 2011; McIlveen & Patton, 2010), and Patton and McMahon (1999, 2006a) encouraged career counsellors to engage in a reflection process (see reflection process later in this chapter).

## THE STF AND CAREER ASSESSMENT

While counselling from a systems theory perspective is grounded in constructivist approaches, it does not preclude the use of assessment, activities or theories emanating out of the logical positivist worldview. For example, McMahon and M. Watson (2012b) described an Integrative Structured Interview (ISI) process that incorporates the quantitative Self-Directed Search into a narrative career counselling interview process. A strength of the STF is that the contribution of both worldviews may be recognised. McMahon and Patton (2002a) suggested that career counsellors may employ a plurality of practices and operate on a continuum of practice that ranges between constructivism and logical positivism and that elements of both worldviews may be utilised in complementary ways, a point more recently emphasised by Sampson (2009). For example, a traditional predictive assessment tool may be embedded into a process whereby the client is actively involved in ascribing meaning to the results in the context of their lives. The STF itself has itself been used to inform the development of career assessment tools. For example, McIlveen et al. (2003) developed and evaluated a semi-structured career assessment interview derived from the STF, and McIlveen et al. (2005) described a narrative sentence-completion process that facilitates clients' exploration of their personal career systems. The My Career Chapter process (MCC; McIlveen, 2011; McIlveen & Patton, 2010), based on the STF provides an opportunity for clients and for career counsellors to reflect on their lives. The STF has informed the development of the My System of Career Influences (MSCI) career assessment process for adolescents (McMahon et al., 2005a, b) and for adults (McMahon et al., 2013a, b). The structure of the STF specifically guides the structure and process of the MSCI.

*The My System of Career Influences Reflection Activity (MSCI)*

The Systems Theory Framework (STF) presented an opportunity for the development of a qualitative assessment process that can guide individuals in reflecting on the influences in their career development. Using the subsystems of the STF, a booklet called the My System of Career Influences (MSCI; McMahon et al., 2005a), was developed and tested based on suggestions provided for the development of qualitative career assessment processes (McMahon et al., 2003). Initially an adolescent version of the MSCI (McMahon et al., 2005a, b) was published and subsequently an MSCI adult version (McMahon et al., 2013a, b) was published. The description presented here is relevant to both versions of the MSCI.

The MSCI is a qualitative career assessment process that represents stringent theoretical, conceptual and practical refinements over a number of years. As an application of the STF, the MSCI provides clients with the opportunity to meaningfully create their own career stories through reflection (McMahon, Patton, & M. Watson, 2004). The trialling process has demonstrated that the MSCI is theoretically grounded, client oriented, holistic, sequential and a meaningful learning experience (McMahon et al., 2005), all of which accords with the

guidelines suggested by McMahon et al. (2003) for developing qualitative career assessment tools.

The MSCI reflection activity enables individuals to construct their system of career influences through a guided reflection process. In the same way as the STF was constructed subsystem by subsystem in chapter 9, individuals are also invited to construct their own MSCI subsystem by subsystem. Essentially, the process engaged in by individuals and career development facilitators follows the guidelines for using qualitative career assessment proposed by McMahon and Patton (2002b).

The MSCI booklet provides individuals with the opportunity to reflect on their current career development. The booklet guides an individual's reflections by providing brief information, instructions and examples, and a place where reflections can be recorded. This guided process begins with the individual's *Present career situation* in which the individual reflects on occupational aspirations, work experience, life roles, previous decision-making and support networks available. The individual is then encouraged to identify and prioritise influences by *Thinking about who I am*, *Thinking about the people around me*, and *Thinking about society and the environment*. In the next section on *Thinking about my past, present and future*, the individual reflects on past career influences, present circumstances and anticipated future lifestyle. The summation of the individual's reflection on influences is represented diagrammatically on a page titled *Representing My System of Career Influences*, as well as on a chart titled *My System of Career Influences*. In the next step of the reflective process individuals are provided with the opportunity to reflect on insights gained through the guided reflective process and through telling their career stories, thus enabling them to elicit meaning and learning. Following this, a guide to developing an action plan is provided for individuals to identify and record the next steps they will take. For example, individuals are invited to discuss their MSCI with others in their systems of influences and to also consider action planning within their broader system of influences. A particular strength of the MSCI is that the final page provides an opportunity for individuals to revisit their MSCI at a later date, to complete it for a second time and to compare their system of influences and change over time.

The comprehensive MSCI Facilitators' Guide (McMahon et al., 2005b; McMahon et al., 2013b) provides career development facilitators with a review on constructivist assessment, a theoretical overview of the MSCI, a guide for using the MSCI with individuals as well as in classroom settings, case studies and learning activities, and a detailed description of the development and trialling process. The trialling and development of the adolescent version was conducted in both Australia and South Africa in three stages over a four year period. The trialling and development of the adult version was conducted by career counsellors in Australia, South Africa, and England with a range of clients in settings including large public sector organisations and private organisations.

The MSCI is suitable for use with individual clients, with groups and in classroom settings. Working with individual clients becomes a collaborative process in which the career counsellor can be seen as a facilitator, encouraging a

process that is meaningful to the client. Similarly, in a group setting, the counsellor or guidance teacher can facilitate a group discussion of different perspectives. As evidenced by the publication of the MSCI, the practical application of the Systems Theory Framework continues to be recognised and developed.

#### REVIEWING PRACTICE

As previously discussed, career counsellors enter into the system of influence of the individuals with whom they work. Thus there is a need for career counsellors to reflect on the pattern of their own career development and their role as lifelong learners, their practice in relation to the integration of theory and practice, their beliefs, values and culture, and the complexity of the career counselling relationship as illustrated in [Figure 13.2](#). Such reflection may be done individually or in the context of clinical supervision, a topic discussed in chapter 11. The following questions may be used to guide career counsellors' personal and professional reflection. By conducting such a review on a regular basis, career counsellors may demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and a commitment to connecting with their system of influences, its meaning to them and also their own culture. Such regular reviews may facilitate enhanced self-understanding in career counsellors before they enter the system of influences of others.

##### *Reflecting on the Pattern of my Own Career Development*

- What influences operated on my career development as a young person?
- How have I integrated these influences?
- What are the patterns and themes of my career development?
- What is my career narrative?
- What is the place of work in my life?
- What other life roles do I hold and what are my priorities?
- What conflicts exist between my life roles and how do I resolve these?
- What values and attitudes do I hold about:
  - particular types of work, for example certain professions;
  - the value of education;
  - individuals of low socioeconomic background, gay men and lesbians, individuals of racial and ethnic origin, individuals with disability;
  - the impact of technology; and
  - particular work related issues such as working mothers, or youth unemployment?

##### *Demonstrating that I am a Lifelong Learner*

- In what ways do I update my counselling skills?
- In what ways do I update my knowledge of career development theory?
- In what ways do I revisit my career narrative and its influence on my counselling?

## CHAPTER 13

- How frequently do I participate in continuing professional development?
- How frequently do I participate in clinical supervision?
- How do I update my knowledge of the changes in the world of work?
- How do I update my knowledge of the use of technology in my work as a career practitioner?
- What learning goals have I achieved recently?
- What are my current learning goals?
- How will I achieve my learning goals?

### *Understanding of the Integration of Career Development Theory and Career Counselling Practice*

- Do I have an up-to-date working knowledge of career development theory?
- How do I apply this to my work?
- What links am I able to make between career theory and practice that I was not once able to make?
- Am I aware of the integration between career development theories and between theory and career counselling practice?

### *Knowledge of Counselling Theory and its Application to Career Counselling*

- What is my background in counselling? What counselling theories underpin my work?
- What links am I able to make between counselling theory and career counselling that I was not once able to make?
- What are the implications of this for counselling, for example what are my beliefs about clients, change and the role of the counsellor?
- What role do I play in career counselling?

### *My Personal Practice*

- How do I feel about my counselling, for example bored, excited?
- How do I keep clear boundaries between my own issues, values and attitudes, and those of my client?
- In what ways do I individualise my counselling sessions according to the needs of the clients, or do I follow a fairly standard format?
- Am I aware of the system of influences impacting on my clients?
- Do I adopt a narrow or broad focus in my work with clients?
- Are there some clients or issues that I would prefer/or not prefer to work with?
- Do I receive supervision to help me clarify my own issues and issues of professional practice?

As evidenced in these questions, it is essential that career counsellors see themselves as lifelong learners who constantly reflect on their practice and upgrade their knowledge and skills. In a rapidly changing world, not to do so may result in an outdated or narrow range of practices poorly suited to a postmodern world.



MEETING 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CAREER COUNSELLING NEEDS

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the value of career counselling has been recognised for its importance to individuals and to society. Recurring throughout this book has been the narrative of change. Reflected in this change is an emerging constructivist worldview which poses a significant challenge to traditional career counselling. Thus, at the same time as the profile of career counselling has risen, it is being confronted with enormous challenges to revise its practice in order to cope with changing demands. The challenge for career counsellors is the construction of a new identity and the production of a “good narrative” for career practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (M. Watson & McMahon, 2005b, p. ix). Constructivism offers the possibility of responding appropriately to 21<sup>st</sup> century demands. Consistent with the tenets of constructivism, the STF offers an approach and practical applications that are theoretically and practically consistent, accommodates the traditional and constructivist positions and values their complementarities, and provides a map that may guide practice. Thus the STF provides a script that is responsive to the demands of the changing world of the new century.

## **ORGANISATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL CAREER SYSTEMS: NEW RELATIONSHIPS**

While much theorising about career development has occurred within the psychological disciplines, Collin (1998) and others have asserted that the environment of careers has been largely neglected by career theorists and consequently there has been a lack of connection between the fields of career psychology and organisational psychology. Career psychology includes “career choice, education and counselling. It has been fed by considerable research effort and theory, based largely in North American counselling psychology” (p. 413). Organisational psychology, largely influenced by organisational psychology and sociology, and focused on organisational careers “has contributed to the instrumental practice of career management and career development in organisations. Despite the overlapping interest in career, there has been little interaction or collaboration between those working in the two areas” (Collin, p. 413). As Nicholson and West (1988) asserted, career theorists “seem to have put all their emphasis on the individual at the expense of the organisation” (p. 224), and M. B. Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989) acknowledged that “despite calls (during the 1970s and 1980s) for integrating different disciplinary views, much of the work has yet to be done” (p. 11). Inkson and M. B. Arthur (2002) asserted that it was not until the 1970s that the term career began to be part of the curriculum of the business schools and a number of texts published in this time (Hall, 1976; Van Maanen, 1977; Schein, 1978) “signalled the business schools’ interest in promoting individual careers as a means of advancing organizational as well as individual ends” (p. 288). Career management was related to companies’ management of their workers in line with the company strategic plan, and individuals’ return for commitment to the company was a career path and long term career security. From the organisational field, Schein (2007) emphasised that career was more analysed from the perspective of psychology than of sociology, economics, political science and anthropology. Other authors have discussed the “parallel streams” of sociology and vocational psychology (Moore, Gunz & Hall, 2007, p. 33) with “little interdependency” between them (Gunz & Peiperl, 2007, p.8). From the perspectives of vocational psychologists, G. D. Gottfredson (2001) wrote about the “growing cleavage” (p. 197) between the vocational psychologists and the industrial/organisational psychologists. Many vocational psychologists have identified the separation between the fields (Blustein, 2001, 2006; Van Esbroeck, 2007; Savickas & Baker, 2005), with Leong (1996b) citing Osipow, referring to a “disciplinary provincialism” (p. 336).

However a growing literature (Arnold, 1997; M. B. Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; M. B. Arthur et al., 1999; Bills, 2004; Collin & Young, 2000; Hall, 1996; Peiperl, M. B. Arthur, & Anand, 2002; Peiperl, M. B. Arthur, Goffee, & Morris, 2000) is evident about the changing workplace and the consequent changes to our understanding of the place of career in individuals' lives (Richardson, 1993, 1996, 2000) and in the lives of organisations (see also chapter 1). This literature has been developed from the disciplines of sociology, vocational psychology and organisational psychology. "Careers are becoming more varied and more difficult to manage for both individuals and organisations" (Arnold, Silvester, Patterson, Robertson, Cooper, & Burnes, 2005, p. 523), and a number of authors have emphasised the need for organisational and traditional vocational psychology to work together to understand changing careers (Amundson et al., 2002; M. B. Arthur, 2008; G. D. Gottfredson, 2001; Inkson, Furbish, & Parker, 2002; Lent, 2001; Vondracek, 2001). Fouad (2001) commented on her dream that in the future, "An interdisciplinary team of vocational psychologists, sociologists, economists, and anthropologists will test newly developed theoretical constructs to explain contextual factors in vocational behavior" (p. 189). Schein (2007) argued that territorial isolation between the disciplines "hurts the overall understanding of what careers are ultimately about" (p. 573). Collin and Patton (2009a) responded to this call, drawing together writers from across the discipline divide to work towards a multidisciplinary field of "career studies". As outlined by Herr (2009) in his foreword to this book, the structure of the book is unique, with six pairs of chapters focusing on a major issue of relevance to career being written from a vocational psychological perspective and an organisational perspective. Herr emphasised that there is much overlap between the perspectives, and that any differences were more in emphasis than totality. More recently, Khapova and M. B. Arthur (2011) edited a special issue of the journal *Human Relations* that focused on interdisciplinary approaches to contemporary career studies and called for "urgent shift toward greater interdisciplinary inquiry" (p. 3). This chapter will present the background to the traditional relationship between individual and organisations, and the traditional divide between theories of career choice and development and changing theoretical understandings. It will focus on the calls and responses for a merging of these two fields as individuals are increasingly urged to become self-organising systems and organisations are urged to operate more as open systems and to acknowledge the diversity of the context in which they operate and of the individuals they employ (Oliveira, 2000). The chapter will then outline a number of strategies and models designed to facilitate integration across theory, and describe the potential of the Systems Theory Framework to integrate both theory and practice.

#### THE CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

The changes in the role of career in an individual's life have largely been related to the significant changes identified in the broad world of work and in the workplace. At a macro level, these changes include increased globalisation, advances in

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technology and information, the so called shift from the industrial era to the knowledge or information era, and a change in the world population's demographic characteristics (see Niles, Herr, & Hartung, 2002; Savickas, 2000b, 2008b; Storey, 2000 for a detailed description). Arnold et al. (2005, p. 521) have outlined the following as key changes in the employment scene:

- Increasing workload for individuals;
- Organisational changes including decrease in number of people employed and in management layers;
- Increased global competition;
- More transdisciplinary team based work;
- More short term contracts, part-time, and casual work;
- Frequent changes in the skill requirements in the workforce;
- Increased diversity in participants in the workforce;
- Increasing self-employment and employment in small organisations; and
- Larger numbers of people working at or from home.

More recently, the world has faced the global financial collapse (GFC) which began late in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and which continues to be of major significance as this book goes to press. Multinational businesses worldwide collapsed, and many small countries were at the brink of collapse and had to install severe austerity measures to receive banking injections to maintain national liquidity. As a result, many countries face massive unemployment rates, significant citizen unrest and political destabilisation. A significant global geopolitical shift has also resulted, with growth continuing in China, and significant downward pressures in the traditional economic giants of the United States and large European countries. The impact of this economic instability on careers, and the concept of career, is still unfolding. Individuals' career expectations and opportunities are impacted by temporary recessions; the nature of the impact of the GFC remains to be understood.

## CAREER RESPONSES TO CHANGE

These changes in the workplace have resulted in a change in the nature of the relationship between the individual and the organisation from the traditional contract which emphasised mutuality and reciprocity in the drive for vertical progression for both individuals and organisations towards an employment arrangement which “represents a more calculative and instrumental relationship between employees and their work organisations ... and where secure careers are being replaced by an ‘over-to-you’ philosophy where ownership and responsibility for career management are transferred or delegated to the individual employee” (Doyle, 2000, p. 233). Storey (2000) described this shift as one from a long term relational contract to a more short term transactional contract, where the promise of a secure position in return for organisational and individual loyalty is replaced by a more explicit or overt negotiation around what the individual and the organisation expect to give and receive. Baruch (2004) emphasised that the nature of this

transition was from traditional linear career paths to “multidirectional career paths” (p. 58).

The perspective of career embodied in these changes has heralded a paradigm shift in our understanding, from focusing on career development and its traditional connotations to development through work and other life roles. Niles, Herr and Hartung (2002) have represented this shift as career development expanding to human development and its attendant focus on all contexts for human development including family, culture and diverse socioeconomic contexts. Richardson (1993) emphasised that within this new context, work can be characterised as “a central human activity that is not tied to or solely located in the occupational structure ... (and) a basic human function among populations for whom work has a multiplicity of meanings, including but not restricted to career meaning” (p. 427).

The new concepts of career have resulted in what Storey (2000) has termed a “transformation of careers” (p. 33) and a resulting new emphasis in our understanding of career. There are two primary emphases in this literature: first, the recognition of the subjective career, and second, recognition of the need for individuals to become self-organising systems in pursuing a role in the changing world. Collin (1997) lamented the lack of attention in career theory to the subjective career, defined by Arnold and Jackson (1997) as “the sense that individuals make of their careers, their personal histories, and the skills, attitudes and beliefs that they have acquired” (p. 429). Amundson et al. (2002) emphasised the imperative for individuals to learn to intentionally act on environments of change, drawing on an understanding of the individual as a self-organising, active system. This understanding of the individual is also connected with the constructivist principle of the individual as an active agent, and the enactment notion of Weick (1996). Connecting these principles emphasises the interconnection between the individual and the organisation, and “moves us from considering the individual career as a predestined outcome of wider organizational forces, to understanding that individuals ... enact the organizations in which they work. An organization can thus be considered as the enacted product of a complex system of interacting careers – a nice reversal of conventional business thinking” (Inkson & M. B. Arthur, 2002, p. 295).

These notions underpinning the new career have manifested themselves in a number of understandings of career, each of which will be explored in the following section. The boundaryless career (or portfolio career, Handy, 1994), defined as “sequences of job opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of single employment settings (DeFillippi & M. B. Arthur, 1996, p. 127) is one concept identified in the discussion on the new career. Careers are boundaryless as individuals, through choice or necessity, move across organisations, departments within organisations, and different hierarchical levels. More recently, Arnold et al. (2005) also referred to the removal of the boundary between work and non-work. Although there remains debate about the extent of boundaryless careers (Arnold et al., 2005), M. B. Arthur et al. (1999) reported evidence of boundaryless careers in action in New Zealand, where individuals were noted as *careering*, that is, career was seen as a verb not a noun.

The protean career was first described by Hall in 1976. In 2004 he defined it as “a career that is self-determined, driven by personal values rather than organizational rewards, and serving the whole person, family, and life purpose” (p. 2). In addition, the main success criteria of the protean career are subjective (psychological success) and not objective (salary and status). Protean refers to the notion that in order to adapt and survive which Storey (2000) referred to as fracture lines in the career environment; the individual needs to be self-generating. Harley, Muller-Camen and Collin (2004) have argued that the protean career concept advances that of the boundaryless career as it includes discussion on how individuals actively shape and reshape their career to meet the needs of the changing self.

In furthering the subjective view of career, Schein (1990, 1996) identified a number of career anchors, that is, components of an individual’s self-concept and identity that are so central that they would not be jettisoned in a difficult choice situation. Knowledge of one’s own anchors is crucial as individuals begin managing their own career processes. These anchors include managerial competence, technical/functional competence, security, autonomy and independence, entrepreneurial creativity, pure challenge, service/dedication, and lifestyle integration.

The literature on changing careers has also led to the development of a literature on the work individuals need to enact in their own career development, variously termed *competencies* or *metacompetencies*, *career management skills*, and *career capital* (see chapters 10 and 11). As the career patterns of individuals increasingly resemble a patchwork CV characterised by a series of work and learning experiences, of key importance is “metacompetence” which cuts across occupational skills and can be universally applied. A number of authors have identified what they believe to be the most important metacompetencies (see chapters 10 and 11). Each one of these focuses on the importance of lifelong learning. Flexibility and the ability and willingness to continue learning are much more important than specific occupational knowledge and skills and the importance of learning is championed by expanding literatures in career development learning and lifelong learning. Littleton, M. B. Arthur, and Rousseau (2000) emphasised that work is increasingly centred on knowledge and intelligence and that individuals need to take charge of their own learning agendas “in an environment in which ‘organization man’ has become all but extinct” (p. 113).

Krumboltz and Worthington (1999, p. 314) similarly emphasised that “learning how to adapt to changing conditions in the workplace will be one of the essential skills for success” (p. 313). The second set of metacompetencies which Hall (2004) identified as crucial for individuals to be more protean are adaptability and identity (or self-awareness), with Hall emphasising that it is vital that individuals develop both metacompetencies.

This new approach to career requires creative tools such as flexibility, optimism, and imagination and decision-making approaches which are flexible and creative. Peiperl et al. (2002) edited a book which focuses on thinking creatively about careers, with the emphasis on the individual enacting their own career. Peiperl et

al.'s (2000) edited book focused on career frontiers and on individuals living lives of change within a world of new working lives. Similarly in presenting an approach which suggests that individuals need skills to actively engage in "planned happenstance", that is be able to recognise and create chance events into positive opportunities, K. E. Mitchell et al. (1999) identified five necessary skills: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and risk-taking.

Traditional organisational practice which focused on competencies was modelled on three types of company competencies: knowing a company's culture, a company's know-how, and a company's networks. DeFillippi and M. B. Arthur (1996) transferred these three company competencies to parallel individual competencies: knowing-why (individual values, interests, aspirations and motivations), knowing-how (individual abilities, qualifications, skills), and knowing-whom (individual networks and reputation). Recognising the limitations of traditional organisational learning and competencies, and the need to focus on inter-organisational careers, M. B. Arthur et al. (1999) and Inkson and M. B. Arthur (2002) proposed competencies which are transferable and which they term career capital. These authors proposed that the three ways of knowing can be viewed as "repositories for the accumulation and investment of career capital ... (that may) interact with and stimulate each other as the career progresses" (Inkson & M. B. Arthur, 2002, p. 298). The new career is then conceptualised as individuals engaging in project-based work during which time they are engaged in ongoing learning, a learning which they take with them to new projects, a process which Inkson and M. B. Arthur term as learning episodes. Within this new era, "organizations need the autonomous enterprise of mobile individuals, the experience and skill they have gained in their multiple work encounters, and the networks and skills they bring with them" (p. 303). It is evident, however, that this is a dual process as "Individuals need the sense of larger purpose, the opportunities for practice, innovation, and self-development, and the new contacts that organizations bring" (p. 303).

#### CRITIQUES OF AND SUPPORTS FOR THE 'NEW CAREER'

While acknowledging the positive nature of any discussion which broadens the range of life and work experiences which can be included within 'career', Storey (2000) emphasised that the new literature "is in danger of emphasizing the discontinuity and failing to acknowledge the continuity" (p. 34) and noted that traditional careers still have a role to play, albeit in smaller numbers. Along with Blustein (2001, 2006) and Richardson (2000), she emphasised the neglect in much career literature of discussions around work experiences of individuals who are self-employed, unskilled, and those engaged in part-time and broken work experiences. Blustein asserted that any inclusive psychology of working needs to include those groups traditionally marginalised from discussions about career including women, people of colour, and individuals who are not middle class. Like Richardson, Blustein noted that expanding our notion of work to represent one domain within a lifespace, with interconnections to other domains of human

experience “would go a long way to contextualizing the psychological study of working, which is consistent with its integrative location in contemporary life” (p. 178). More recently, Richardson (2012a, b; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013) has argued that as work became more equated with jobs in the market economy, so did the importance of work in other domains, for example, family, decline. Similarly, O’Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria (2013) have emphasised the limitations for women in participating both in organisational careers and in boundaryless and protean careers.

More recently, a number of authors (e.g., Briscoe & D. Hall, 2006) have been critical of the literature’s emphasis on ‘the new career’, and have attempted to provide more conceptual and evidence based clarity on the simple message that ‘the career is dead’ (Hall, 1996). For example, Hall and Las Heras (2009) have modified the earlier proclamation and have asserted that “the organisational career is alive and well” (p. 182), maintaining that “the actual current ‘career contract’ in organisations is a hybrid, an amalgam of the old focus on succeeding by the organisation’s standards and a new desire to craft a personally-meaningful life around one’s work and career” (p. 182). Dries and Verbruggen (2012) have argued that there is a need for empirical data to provide a less conceptual emphasis in relation to this argument. In this vein, Dries, Van Acker and Verbruggen (2012) found that employees with greater potential were more often found in traditional-organisational careers. These authors also reported that traditional organisational careers yield higher career satisfaction, and that career type is indicated more by performance indicators than career orientation.

A number of authors have also acknowledged some practical issues in conceptualisations of the new career. For example, Inkson and M. B. Arthur (2002) argued that workers who have already made substantial investments in one organisation, and those whose primary “career anchor” is security and stability, may find difficulty operating within these new arrangements. Arnold et al. (2005) and Richardson (2000) emphasised that the manifestations of the new career are products of western individualistic culture and that while for some they are liberating, for many they are deeply threatening, representing another opportunity for the strong to prosper and the weak and unskilled to be additionally disadvantaged. Richardson extended her critique of the new ideology by emphasising the extensive focus on the individual for responsibility in career and consequently personal success, and the collapsing of the personal and public domains, and in doing so the differences between them. In sum, Richardson sees the new career ideology as serving the needs of “the new capitalist order that requires workers who do not believe that they should depend on an employer to provide the safety and security long associated with stable employment, and that enables managers more easily to dispense with workers” (p. 203). She asserted that the new career ideology is poised to contribute to more threat to individuals’ self-esteem as those who do not fit well with the “new career entrepreneur” may blame themselves for personal as well as career failures – “Workers more than ever, are on their own” (p. 203). Richardson’s work extends to the development of empowerment strategies for counsellors (discussed later in this chapter) to alert



individuals to their lives as well as to social conditions – “the world is changing and people need to be empowered to adapt to this world and to influence the world to adapt to their needs, desired, and goals” (p. 206).

In acknowledging the differences between relational contracts with organisations and transactional contracts, D. Hall and Las Heras (2009) have emphasised the following points:

- Young (and old) employees are concerned about their career development. While younger employees share this view, their expression of it is different from older generations. Rather than focus on upward mobility in their careers, they are focused on learning and growing, and a desire to serve and contribute to society more broadly.
- “All other things being equal, employees would like to stay and have a satisfying career in their current organisation” (p. 190). D. Hall and Las Heras asserted that mobility between organisations is not a main driver for workers; rather it is continuing to grow and learn as employees in an organisation that they respect and that respects them.

These authors go on to suggest career development actions that organisations should engage in, in particular embedding practices which contribute to the creation of developmental organisational cultures.

#### INTEGRATION OF INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL APPROACHES TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

As discussed in chapter 1, traditional career theory has been disjointed and has neglected a discussion of context of both the individual and career. As such career theory development has been dominated by differential and developmental psychology bases, and underweight in contributions from the branches of organisational and industrial psychology, and the discipline of sociology. Similarly most theories focused on career choice, developed as they were during times of full employment, linear and/or vertical career paths, and career decision-making being necessary once only.

The traditional career/vocational psychology (the terms are used interchangeably in this chapter) focuses on individual career processes and outcomes while industrial/organisational psychology focuses on organisation centred themes. Indeed Super (1983) emphasised the distinction between vocational psychology and organisational psychology, stressing that the former “make clear the focus on the developing person in search of and pursuing a vocation ... rather than on the static or technologically changing occupation” (p. 6). As Inkson and M. B. Arthur (2002) noted, career development did not enter the literature of the organisational psychologists until the late 1970s, and then as a means whereby managers “could use organisational resources and know-how to develop applications designed to put the individual’s career, rather than merely his or her momentary energies, into the service of the company” (p. 289). In addition

such a larger focus assisted in understanding wider organisational phenomena. The limitations of this literature have been well documented (see chapter 1).

However the changing roles of individuals and workplaces, and of the interactions between the two, have increased calls for a greater blending of the field in order to foster a more complete understanding of very complex phenomena. These calls have recognised the insularity of traditional vocational psychology and its lack of attention to related psychological domains (e.g., personality, social, cognitive, educational, health and organisational psychology), as well as related social science domains of sociology and economics (Savickas, 1995; Lent, 2001). G. D. Gottfredson (2001) and Vondracek (2001) emphasised that the integrity of vocational psychology is threatened by the lack of integration with kindred fields such as industrial/organisational psychology. G. D. Gottfredson further asserted that vocational psychologists “should not focus so narrowly on the goals sought by individuals, but should conduct research and practice in pursuit of goals sought by employers, ethnic or cultural groups, and the economic system more generally” (p.199). Citing the changing work world, the changing occupational pathways, the disappearance of boundaries between private life and work, and the changing nature of organisations from those in which the concept of career originally developed, Vondracek (2001) extended this argument for a greater integration between vocational psychology and other psychologies. He argued that “career development seems to have become as much the business of the organization as it is the business of the individual” (p. 257) and stressed that unless vocational psychologists assume a role in the lives of individuals and organisations they may well diminish the viability of the profession.

As discussed previously, Collin and Patton (2009a) was the first book which aimed to bring together writers from across the relevant disciplines in a ‘multidisciplinary dialogue’. It is noted that this book focused on two perspectives – vocational psychological and organisational. Collin (2009a) emphasised the challenges in any dialogue approach, with the first challenge being clarifying the difference between multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary.

With multidisciplinary, several disciplinary perspectives come together to work independently on the same problem, and are unchanged in themselves when they disperse. With interdisciplinary, their collaboration may result in the building of bridges between them or, going even further, integration between them and the formation of a new, hybrid, discipline. (p. 8)

Collin acknowledged the language and meaning challenges in any possible collaboration, and the need for the field to be clear about these before pursuing collaboration. She defined transdisciplinarity as follows:

Transdisciplinarity, to which few references are made in the career literature, is the use of theories, concepts, and approaches from one or more disciplines as an overarching conceptual framework to address issues in a number of disciplines, and I have suggested that systems theory and chaos theory are examples of this. (p. 8)

Actually identifying and deciding on the form of collaboration, and the readiness and maturity of the field in relation to that collaboration, is a subtheme of this whole book. This argument made by Collin resonates with the discussion in relation to connecting career theories made in chapter 7.

Collin (2009a) identified the second challenge as that of identifying just what disciplines should be involved. Earlier in this chapter, comments on which disciplines were relevant in the discussion of career emphasised just how significant and major this challenge is. In addition, Collin noted that demands for collaboration are not unanimous.

The third challenge, identified earlier, that of the ongoing attempts within vocational psychology for “recovering the lost twin” (Collin, 2009a, p. 9) of industrial/organisational psychology, and for developing a convergence between the many career/vocational psychology theories (see chapter 7) is far from resolved. Collin however acknowledged that this was the first area in which to attempt to develop an integration. Interestingly, Savickas (2009b) suggested that it may be necessary to change our language, and replace vocational psychology with a term such as “career studies” (p. 206). Collin developed a wiki [www.careerstudies.net](http://www.careerstudies.net) to encourage further dialogue.

Collin (2009a) emphasised that the Collin and Patton (2009a) book of dialogue was a limited but important beginning. Despite considerable activity within vocational psychology to work toward an integration of career theories (see chapter 7), there had been no prior effort to bring together the multiple other disciplines which can contribute to our understanding of career behaviour. By bringing together two significant perspectives on career – the vocational psychological and the organisational– the Collin and Patton (2009a) book was an important beginning. Collin (2009a) asserted that working within these two fields as a beginning “would demonstrate the kind of benefits that could be gained by investing further in multidisciplinary collaboration, as well as ways of going about that” (p. 9).

#### *Approaches to Discipline Integration*

There have been a number of approaches to attempt theoretical integration, specifically between traditional career theory and organisational career theory. We will explore the work of Van Maanen and Schein (1977) and the more recent work of Inkson (2004). In this section we will also explore the potential of the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) to form a basis for this integration. Finally, this section will provide an overview of the focus and outcomes of the international dialogue which featured in Collin and Patton (2009a) as another example of a broader theoretical and practical integration.

#### *Integrative Model (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977)*

Van Maanen and Schein were very early advocates of developing an ecological model to take into account the interaction between individual, institutional and

organisational variables in an individual's career development. They recognised the role that psychological and sociological approaches to the study of careers could have to this model and asserted that "what is required ... is a focus that shifts from an inordinate concentration on occupational roles or personal characteristics to one that emphasizes the career as an object of inquiry" (p. 44). In presenting their integrated model they focused on the internal perspective (the individual's subjective evaluation) and the external perspective ("the more or less tangible indicators of a career – occupation, job level, mobility, opportunity, task characteristics and the like", p. 45). They also acknowledged the importance of understanding the individual within all components of his or her life, and across time throughout the lifespan. These components then, the internal and external career, the elements of the life space of the individual, and the interactive developmental processes of each of these over time, were combined to present an interactional schema which was depicted in a career cube. The three dimensions of the cube represented the stages of self or life development (including individual, physical and temperamental factors), the stages of career development (including culture and social structure, and occupational and organisational characteristics), and the stages of family development. The individual's life can be mapped through various sections of the cube. "Thus any given cell in the cube can be thought of as a particular set of forces acting on the individual; the forces derive from a particular stage of self, family and career development" (p. 65). While the model proposed by Van Maanen and Schein incorporated elements of traditional theory (for example the stages identified by Super), it cannot be viewed as an attempt to fully converge extant theories. It is however an attempt to recognise the validity and interaction of individual and context in career.

*Metaphors of Career (Inkson, 2004, 2007)*

Joining with other writers in lamenting the lack of integration in career theory and practice, Inkson (2004, 2006) proposed that metaphors may serve to assist in the thinking about the complexities of individual careers and the field of careers, and indeed act as frameworks for much career theory. He asserted that "This range of metaphors may enable us to examine career phenomena through contrasting lenses, triangulate the different views, and hopefully arrive at a synthesis which recognises the validity of each viewpoint and its integration with others" (Inkson, 2004, p. 107). Inkson identified nine career metaphors:

1. *Legacy metaphor*: Career as inheritance – Psychological and sociological theories have acknowledged the influence of gender, social class, ethnicity, role models, inherited IQ and parental attitudes to work in individual career development. These have been discussed in chapters 2-6. Although the proactive genre in much career literature argues that individuals may overcome the deterministic nature of negative inheritances, Inkson acknowledged that these cannot be ignored.

2. *Craft metaphor*: Career as construction. This metaphor emphasises the active role of each individual in constructing, or crafting his or her own career. Inkson has chosen craft as “it balances considerations of functionality and creativity” (p. 101). Poehnell and Amundson (2002) discussed their concept of CareerCraft, and argued for creativity to enhance career, a process which involves engaging, energising, and empowerment. The craft metaphor is in keeping with notions of a number of writers, including Savickas’ (2002, 2005) career construction theory. Similarly, Redekopp and Day (1999) suggested that career building is more useful than career planning in an environment where an individual needs to take charge of short term goals and continuous decision-making, building on previous life/work activities with a direction in mind, and allowing all the while for serendipity [defined by Redekopp and Day as “the act of discovering something useful while one is pursuing something else”, p. 276]. Amundson (1998) also argued that our approaches to career need to be characterised by active engagement, a similar concept presented by M. B. Arthur et al. (1999) as actively engaging and enacting upon the environment. Inkson noted that career practitioners can be viewed as master craftspeople within this metaphor.
3. *Seasons metaphor*: Career as cycle. Inkson drew on the age/stage work of developmental career theorists in describing this metaphor. He also acknowledged the interaction between individual life cycles and family cycles. In calling for a more flexible and functional thinking about career cycles, Inkson noted the importance of focusing on recursive microlevel cycles (which may be conceptualised as similar to the minicycles discussed by Super, 1992).
4. *Matching metaphor*: Career as fit. This metaphor is representative of much of the trait factor theories, including work adjustment and person-environment fit theories. The shortcomings of these approaches are raised, especially in relation to their applicability in times of change. The protean career of Hall (1976) is raised as an example of the individual adjusting or self-organising to “fit” changing circumstances.
5. *Path metaphor*: Career as journey. Inkson recounted within this metaphor the long history of career being conceptualised as a linear journey between places and time. As less planned and more open career trajectories are increasingly apparent he acknowledged that career “travel” may replace journey which connotes more precise beginning and end points.
6. *Network metaphor*: Career as encounters and relationships. Within this metaphor Inkson emphasised the social and political nature of an individual’s career encounters; career is ultimately embedded in social connectedness. The various contexts of these connections are embodied in the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a).
7. *Theatre metaphor*: Career as role. This metaphor emphasises career action as role behaviour, and emphasises the multiple roles of the individual as identified by Super (1990) as well as the roles identified in the current

career literature where the individual has been referred to as an actor, a sculptor, or a writer, constructing or enacting a career script.

8. *Economic metaphor*: Career as resource. Inkson (2004) reminds the field of the limitation of the traditional view that the employee is a cost to the organisation; rather it is acknowledged that people are an organisation's key assets.
9. *Narrative metaphor*: Career as story. In this metaphor Inkson acknowledged the increasing role of story in documenting careers at a macrolevel, as well as their increasing value in constructivist career counselling practice (see chapter 13 in this book). Building on this metaphor, McMahon (2007b) contributed a chapter in Inkson's (2007) book on the application of metaphor to career counselling in the context of organisational settings.

*Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a)*

Chapter 9 in this book emphasised the potential for the STF to provide an integrated theoretical approach to career. In 1966, Katz and Kahn emphasised the need for organisations to become open systems in order to fully incorporate importation of energy from the environment as well as experiencing the re-energising of the system from sources in the environment. Their analysis of organisations could well be applied to the body of traditional career psychology. More recently, a number of authors have acknowledged that a systems theory approach is vital in linking individual and organisation, and traditional psychological approaches to career and emerging transdisciplinary psychological approaches (see chapter 7 for a further discussion). In advocating more cross-domain efforts in the study of careers, Lent (2001) emphasised that "... it stands to reason that a comprehensive understanding of career behavior will ultimately require an integration of individual and organizational perspectives, perhaps within the context of a larger systems framework" (p. 217). Similarly M. B. Arthur et al. (1999) advocated that new perspectives in careers "consistently emphasize the interdependence of a system's elements (in our case, careers) over time, rather than traditional one-way cause-effect relationships" (p. 10). Within the STF (see chapter 9), organisations within which individuals work are viewed as key elements of the social system. The recursive interaction between individual career development and employing organisations is acknowledged (Amundson et al., 2002; Hall, 1996; Herriott, 1992; Oliveira, 2000). Similarly, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the broader context of the environmental-societal system is hugely influential in the manner of influence on the world of work and on organisational structures and practice within them. With the advance of environmental-societal influence of globalisation, some authors have begun to consider the implication of global careers (e.g., Dickmann & Baruch, 2011; D. Thomas & Inkson, 2009) which has implications for individuals and also for organisations. As emphasised by Arnold and Cohen (2013), "As we witness the career implications of the dramatic transformation of our work context in the wake of economic austerity, we are constantly reminded that careers do not unfold independently from organizational

settings” (p. 273). The STF therefore, with its dual role of integrating theory, and integrating theory and practice, is a useful framework for incorporating understandings from traditional career theory as well as theories within organisational psychology to develop an understanding of the dynamic nature and complexity of individual and organisational career behaviour.

*A Multidisciplinary Dialogue (Collin & Patton, 2009a)*

Savickas (2009b) acknowledged that despite almost three decades of discussion from both “sides” about merging the vocational psychological and organisational thinking around career (Amundson et al., 2002; M. B. Arthur, 2008; Erdheim, Zickar, & Yankelevich, 2007; Collin, 1998, 2009b; Patton & Collin, 2009; Patton & McMahon, 2006a; Super & Hall, 1978), very little work had actually been done. Collin and Patton collaborated on the first major book to focus on this issue. This section of the chapter will focus on definitions underpinning the book, the contributors and structure of the book, and recommendations for further dialogue emanating from the project.

Collin and Patton (2009a) used the standard definition of ‘vocational psychology’ as the study of vocational behaviour and development (Crites, 1969). This field focuses on career decision-making and work adjustment and effective interventions to facilitate these. Represented in the APA’s Division of Counseling Psychology, it is also referred to as career psychology. The practice activities within this field include career counselling and guidance, career education, and the provision of career of information.

Collin and Patton (2009a) undertook to use “a broader understanding of the ‘organisational’ perspective than that which vocational psychologists generally have, although it includes how they would typically understand it, that is, as I/O psychology” (Collin, 2009a, p. 11). It includes organisational practices which have been identified by a number of authors (Herr, 1990; Hesketh, 2001). Therefore the ‘organisational’ perspective includes “organisational behaviour and organisation studies, the academic study of human resource management/development, management development, succession planning, and organisation development” (Collin, 2009a, p. 11). While Collin (2009a) acknowledges that there are many factors which mean that these definitions do not have clear boundaries, she acknowledges that incorporating the organisation as a context for career, as described by Patton and McMahon (2006a), suggests that we would examine the relationship between the individual and the organisation, both “the organisation as a source and stimulus of individual learning and development, motivation, challenge, fulfilment, direction, and stress,” (p. 12) and its role in “the shaping of both individual and career through socialisation, training, reward, and control, and how the individual’s responses play a part in shaping the organisation” (p. 12).

In developing an edited book to represent a dialogue, the editors developed a very structured and possibly “strong handed” editorial approach. In order for a dialogue to be developed, the book was structured with writers constructing their contribution as half of a pair, each written from one perspective. Authors received

detailed outlines of what was expected, and in some cases, specific questions to incorporate responses to within their chapters (see Collin, 2009a).

Collin and Patton's (2009b) conclusion to the dialogue noted that there were differences but also many commonalities between the perspectives, thereby demonstrating that "this book has already made the argument that the basis for dialogue exists, certainly between vocational psychology and organisational psychology, but even between vocational psychology and the broader organisational perspective" (p. 215). The authors noted that scope for further dialogue exists in relation to a number of common themes: namely: Origins, identity, regulation and control; Context; Constructs, theories and approaches; Paradigms: ontology and epistemology; research methodology and methods; interventions; and stakeholders in career. Collin and Patton (2009b) suggested a number of ways forward, building on the suggestion made by Savickas (2009b) for a joint summit where pairs of theorists/researchers/practitioners make coordinated presentations. Savickas named a number of possible topics for such a summit, but acknowledged that others could be raised. These topics included a focus on key theories of career development (e.g., Super, Holland, Big 5 factors of personality); the work of Charles Handy's portfolio life and Nancy Schlossberg's transitions; work family balance; career success; the work of Hall and Savickas; psychological contract; employability and career adaptability; person-environment fit and work adjustment; occupational identification/commitment and vocational identity development; and expatriate assignments and cultural competence. He suggested that "All of these topics directly concern managing one's work life in a lifelong quest to construct one's best possible future and may be foundational elements in a science of career studies" (p. 207). Additional ways forward included developing and maintaining professional relationships with colleagues from "other" perspectives, developing dialogue through joint meetings and conferences, and possibly joint publications (through books or journal special editions), and actively developing collaborative research projects; embedding dialogue in existing work (e.g., through the work of Blustein, 2006). It is important that the work developed in this approach continues, and as Collin and Patton (2009b) asserted, that it becomes evident "beyond dialogue" but in our theorising, research and practice.

#### THEORY AND PRACTICE: TRADITIONAL ORGANISATIONAL CAREERS TO NEW CAREERS

As the major theme throughout this chapter has highlighted, notions of career, career theory and career practice have remained quite separate for the fields of career/vocational psychology and organisational psychology. This section of the chapter will present attempts to merge the two fields through practice, and argue that in dealing with the new career, this merging may occur.

The distinction between the two fields is perhaps most starkly represented in the following two definitions of career development: "Career development is ... a lifelong process of getting ready to choose, choosing, and continuing to make choices from among the many occupations available in our society" (D. Brown &



Brooks, 1990b, xvii); and “Career development is an ongoing formalized effort by an organization that focuses on developing and enriching the organization’s human resources in the light of both the employees’ and organization’s needs” (L. Byars & Rue, 2000, p. 248). The first definition clearly focuses on the individual and identifies occupations as a context for individual development; any relationship between the individual and this context is not made explicit. The second definition clearly places the organisation at the centre of the process, although it does acknowledge a relationship between the individual and the organisation. Previous discussions within this chapter have acknowledged that the starkness of these differences is diminishing.

Traditional organisational theory focused on careers as being connected to the tracking of vertical paths through rigid hierarchies of large organisations; the role of the individual was to take responsibility for his or her own career development within a framework of organisational support (Doyle, 2000). Career in this context could not be considered from the individual’s subjective experience only. Related to this approach was the assumed relationship between the goals of the individual and those of the organisation. Within these perspectives, and following Schein’s (1978) linking of human resource management and individual career management, the individual’s interest in career self-management was acknowledged at the same time as the company’s role was as a co-participant in, and beneficiary of, the dual processes. However, the mid 1980s saw significant change, whereby “this relatively comfortable view of careers unfolding within a single and largely benevolent corporate setting has been jolted” (Inkson & M. B. Arthur, 2002, p. 290). The significant changes identified throughout this chapter have created a major change in the practicality of organisations’ ability to provide employment security for their workforces, leading to what Inkson and M. B. Arthur referred to as “a change in the primacy of organisational careers” (p. 291). The new careers as discussed previously became a reality and Doyle (2000) emphasised “that traditional career management models and structures are struggling to adapt and cope with what is an increasingly complex, diverse and fluid organisational context” (p. 229). Organisations and individuals had to employ much greater creativity and flexibility in career development and career management, where the “emphasis was not on plans but on proactive individual behaviour” (Inkson & M. B. Arthur, 2002, p. 302). Thus there is a shift of responsibility from organisations to employees, who are expected “actively to create and manage a form of personalised ‘employability’ in what is becoming a jobs-for-now structure and culture” (Doyle, 2000, p. 233).

We believe that it is in career counselling practice that the merger between career psychology and organisational psychology can occur, and that the Systems Theory Framework and its theory-practice connection can be facilitative of this merger, a position similar to that taken by the joint position paper on preparing counsellors for career development in the new millennium (ACES/NCDA, 2000). The proposition of a merger in occupational and organisational career counselling underpins the work of Amundson et al. (2002) who suggested that a focus on “self-organising” can be applied to the individual and to their community. As these

authors noted, self-organising is a two way process as individuals are influenced by and in turn enact influence on their environment. Amundson et al. (2002) further developed and applied Amundson's (2003a) active engagement principles and the intelligent careers framework (M. B. Arthur, Claman & DeFillippi, 1995) to the practice of counselling in a self-organising framework.

In addition, these authors emphasised that the individual is not on his or her own; individuals participate in communities and the notion of self-organising careers can be extended to these, defined as "member defined communities from which people draw career support" (Parker & M. B. Arthur, 2000, p. 105). As M. B. Arthur et al. (1999) commented, successful boundaryless careering requires communion (relating closely to others, recognising interdependence) as well as agency (individual action on the environment). It is this focus on the self-organising individual connecting with systems in a process of multiple recursions which strengthens the potential for the STF to be a key theory and practice connection between career psychology and organisational psychology.

#### *The STF and Career Counselling*

At a theoretical level, the STF provides an account of career development that is consistent with the emerging constructivist position on career development and on career counselling. At a practical level, the STF provides a map to guide career counsellors in the telling of their career stories (McMahon & Patton, 2003b; McMahon, Patton, & M. Watson, 2004; Patton and McMahon, 2006a; McMahon, M. Watson & Patton, 2013a, b). In considering career counselling from the perspective of the STF, chapter 13 described the conceptual understandings of the individual, systemic thinking, story and recursiveness and the practical considerations of facilitating connectedness, the use of story and the nature of the counselling relationship that provide a theoretical base for career counsellors guided in their work by the application of the STF. In addition, the key recursive dimensions of the career counselling process were elaborated, specifically connectedness, reflection, meaning-making, learning and agency. What is of particular importance in the STF and the therapeutic system (see [Figure 13.2](#)) is the inclusion of the organisational system of influence. As we have emphasised in this chapter, organisational systems and career communities are important elements of an individual's system. The capacity of the STF and career counselling to connect organisational and career psychology may be demonstrated through the following case studies.

#### *Case Study 1*

*McMahon (2007b) described the situation of a career counsellor from an employee assistance service who, during a visit to a manufacturing company, was approached by a worker who was concerned about being disadvantaged in applying for an internal promotion as a result of not being a native English speaker and having difficulty writing an application and addressing selection*

*criteria in English. Several of his colleagues were also concerned. They had not approached anyone in the company about their concerns because they did not want to be seen as complaining. Realising that the problem was more widespread than this one worker, the career counsellor decided to advocate for the whole group of affected workers. In addition, the career counsellor realised that the company would be selecting from a smaller pool of applicants and may be missing out on the opportunity to promote highly competent workers. In assuming the role of advocate, the career counsellor met with the human resources manager to explain the situation. Together they constructed a solution that was beneficial to the individual workers and also to the organisation.*

#### *Case Study 2*

*Madeline had responsibility for her elderly parents who lived in a granny flat at her home. More recently the level of care they required had increased and Madeline found that she was beginning to take days off work and was concerned that the quality of her work was diminishing because of stress and tiredness. She felt that people at her work were beginning to notice. This concerned her because she had a responsible position and was well respected and liked her work and the company she worked for. Before the situation deteriorated further, she visited a career counsellor about trying to find another job with less responsibility in her local area so that she was more able to care for her parents. In recounting her situation to the career counsellor she expressed immense sadness at leaving the company which she liked and where she enjoyed her work. It became clear that Madeline did not want to leave the company but felt that she had no option. She had not discussed her situation with anyone at work out of concern that they would think she was not coping. Together Madeline and the career counsellor co-constructed a preferred future that included remaining with her present company through either part-time work or working at home. In addition, the career counsellor was able to provide information on a carer's allowance that Madeline could apply for that would supplement her income. Madeline approached her manager and explained her situation. She felt positive that she was able to suggest the possible solutions of part-time work and working from home. Her manager was concerned for Madeline and also recognised her value to the company. Together Madeline and her manager worked out a mutually agreed more flexible employment arrangement. In addition, the manager suggested that Madeline could renegotiate her working arrangements again in the future if her circumstances changed.*

The STF conceptual understandings of the individual, systemic thinking, story and recursiveness are clearly evident in these case studies. For example, both case studies emphasise individuals as self-organising systems that are influenced by and also enact influence on their environments. Fundamental to both case studies is the capacity of the individuals to tell their stories and the capacity of the career counsellors to join with them in the co-construction of preferred future stories. The recursive interaction between the systems of the career counsellor, the client and the organisation is apparent in these case studies. In each case study the career counsellor thinks systemically beyond the immediate therapeutic system in order to co-construct stories of possible futures. For example, in case study 1, the career counsellor moves beyond the therapeutic system to the organisational system to advocate for a larger group of workers. In case study 2, the career counsellor facilitates Madeline's consideration of the possibility of flexible employment arrangements within the social system of the organisation where she works. In addition, the career counsellor looks to the environmental-societal system, specifically social security provisions, to provide Madeline with another option that could be included in her future story.

The STF practical considerations of facilitating connectedness, the use of story and the nature of the counselling relationship are also clearly evident in the case studies. For example, in both case studies, the career counsellors facilitated connectedness between themselves and the individuals and between the individuals and their preferred future stories. Connectedness was also demonstrated between the individuals' systems, the organisational systems, and social and environmental-societal systems. The counselling relationship was fundamental to both individuals being able to relate their stories. In both case studies, connectedness between the career counsellors and the individuals assisted the individuals to move from their existing state of affairs to a desired state of affairs (L. Cochran, 1997).

The STF practice dimensions of connectedness, reflection, meaning-making, learning and agency will now be described in relation to case study 2. In Madeline's story the connectedness between her career issues and her personal issues evidenced their inseparability and supported Savickas' (1993) notion that "career is personal" (p. 212). Madeline was not only grappling with the place of work in her life (Richardson, 1993, 1996, 2000) but also the shape of work in her life. Equally evident is the recursive connectedness between the therapeutic system, Madeline's system of influences including her family system, and the organisational system in which she was employed. Career counselling provided Madeline with a space for reflection where she gained insight into her situation and understood the meaning of her present employment to her. In so doing, the career counsellor took account of her subjective career as well as her objective career. Madeline learned that the future story she had constructed was not an option she felt strongly connected to. Indeed, Madeline had become so stressed that she had to some extent lost sense of her personal agency and resorted to what she saw as a way out. Through the telling of her story, reflection, meaning-making and learning occurred. Madeline and the career counsellor co-constructed a preferred future story. In enacting her future story by approaching her manager, Madeline once

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more became an active agent in the construction of her career; she had reconnected with her personal agency.

These dimensions illustrate the possibilities offered by the STF to facilitate greater links between theory and practice. As core dimensions in keeping with a constructive approach to understanding individuals' behaviour in the new career environment, they transcend career counselling practice across the domains of career psychology and organisational psychology. This focus is in keeping with the focus proffered by Richardson (2000) who emphasised a perspective for counsellors which fosters empowerment through work and relationship practices. Richardson asserted that empowerment is defined as the capacity to "(1) identify goals, (2) develop and utilize personal resources in order best to attain identified goals, and (3) negotiate with the environment to provide needed resources for goal attainment" (p. 204). Richardson contended that her definition reframes agency in a social context, asserting that agency includes the capacity to be self-directed, that is, to pursue one's goals, and to master the environment. The first component of her definition refers to goal directedness, and the second two to mastering the environment. Richardson emphasised that the individual and the environment share responsibility for outcome, and that counsellors must acknowledge the potential of negative social forces to clients – "An awareness that people can only be empowered in a social system that is committed to empowering them directs attention and efforts of counselling and counselling practice both to individual lives and to social conditions" (p. 206).

## CONCLUSION

The complex changes occurring in the world of work have created significant challenges for individuals and organisations. Ironically these changes, whereby individuals and organisations need to function as open self-organising systems, have set up an environment where traditional divisions between career psychology aligned with counselling psychology and industrial/organisational psychology have a greater place and momentum for integration. We believe that further attempts to develop frameworks to integrate theory and practice within this context will continue to be born. We acknowledged the work which was a direct outcome of this chapter in our 2006a text, in particular that undertaken by and reported in Collin and Patton (2009a). We trust that this chapter and book will act as a further stimulus to this important multidisciplinary dialogue.

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